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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF ENGLISH POETRY



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF ENGLISH POETRY

BEING PROLEGOMENA TO A SCIENCE OF ENGLISH PROSODY

BY

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TO

My Former Pupils in the University of Texas

WHOSE INTELLIGENT INQUIRY AND SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY

THE EXPRESSION OF AN UNUSUAL INDEPENDENCE

AND VIRILITY OF THOUGHT

MADE THE WORK OF PREPARING LECTURES FOR THEM ON

THE SCIENCE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

A CONTINUAL PLEASURE



Preface

SEVERAL years ago at the instance of the then editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* I undertook to show that Language and Literature presented a field for scientific study much like that of Economics or Ethics, inasmuch as the phenomena which they furnished were neither accidental nor capricious, but the result of the operation of certain fundamental laws as definite and formulable in the one case as in the other provided one took the trouble to investigate the phenomena in a scientific spirit. For the development of a means of thinking and the selection of a body of thought to be made more or less permanent and general are acts of the human mind to be studied in the light of antecedent causes, and not mere subjects of interesting speculation and dilettante criticism.

I hoped that the keen interest in science which was at that time displaying itself and the peculiar energy of American thought which was then being enkindled would seize upon these interesting problems and solve them by scientific methods; and that this scientific study of our language and

literature in the light of modern knowledge would give us a basis for what might be called a "national" culture, to take the place of the outworn and unscientific Renaissance forms of culture which are coming to be so weak and inefficient as to be on the point of breaking down altogether. But for some reason, or, perhaps, for a multitude of reasons, these suggestions of a scientific method of culture (and they were not intended to be more than suggestions) bore no fruit, though their truth was not controverted so far as I know.

A further practical attempt to embody these methods in a coördinated university system of English teaching, while it revealed the great difficulty of revising methods of university instruction without the preliminary propædeutic of secondary education, nevertheless showed clearly to all who were interested in the experiment the feasibility and desirability of such a system of English culture.

But it requires far more than a single statement of truth and a single successful experiment in method to overcome the traditional prejudice and endowed inertia which oppose all change, however rational and desirable.

It is with no great expectation, therefore, of effecting an immediate reform that the author makes public this, another effort in the direction

of a more scientific and rational English culture. It is rather in the hope that the general reader may find in this little book, however faulty it be, a help to a better comprehension of English poetry; that even though he may not agree with all the author's conclusions, he may, nevertheless, find in them illuminating suggestions to guide him to a better appreciation of this the best part of his literature. And for this reason the treatment of the subject has been made as simple and as practical as possible, and the illustrations have been taken chiefly from Shakspere.

In its scientific aspects the book is rather a statement of prolegomena to a science of poetry than a science of poetry itself. Chief attention has therefore been given to the essential elements of poetry, rather than to the unusual and exceptional phenomena of prosody. As the treatment of the subject from a strictly historical and inductive point of view at the outset parts company with the usual treatises on English prosody, the student will not be surprised at the lack of reference foot-notes to the literature of the subject. Such arrays of learning and "belesenheit," as German scholarship naïvely describes our modern bibliographical learning, belong rather to a dissertation than to a statement of fundamental principles.

I take pleasure in again acknowledging my indebtedness to the Professor of English in the University of Oxford, and to his inspiring example and his patient and illuminating teaching in the scientific and historical study of English. Indeed, the book itself grew out of a remark of his in an Oxford common-room about Mr. Bridge's monograph on Milton's verse, a book which the reader will find illuminating and suggestive.

I must also acknowledge my great indebtedness to a former colleague, the Professor of Economics in the University of Texas, whose clear thinking and practical wisdom in his chosen subject have been of great assistance to definite and succinct formulation in my own.

M. H. L.

Summit, N. J.,
April, 1902.

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BOOK I

POETRY IN GENERAL



An Introduction to the Study of Poetry

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE INADEQUACY OF OUR PRESENT NOTIONS OF POETRY

THE word "poetry" covers a multitude of careless generalizations. Any stirring appeal to the imagination in which is discernible an harmonious arrangement of detail is called "poetry." There is the "poetry of music," the "poetry of architecture," and the "poetry of painting"; there is the "poetry of science," the "poetry of nature," and the "poetry of life"; there is "poetic feeling," "poetic imagination," "poetic prose," "prose poetry."

But not only is the popular usage of the word bewildering and confusing; the formal definitions of poetry as a part of literature are equally misleading. Metaphysical notions of supernatural inspiration are used to explain its origins; ethical notions of moral perfection are used to describe

its influence upon human life; æsthetic generalizations proceeding from vague ideas of a mysterious beauty are used to classify its peculiarities; literary notions of absolute power and perfect fitness of expression are used to guide our appreciation of it into proper channels. In fact, all the vaguenesses and bewildering confusions which attend popular conceptions and descriptions of ethical, intellectual, moral, æsthetic, and literary phenomena at some time or other enter singly or together into the discussion of this subject of poetry.

This is not so much because the phenomena of poetry are in themselves of such a nature as to defy the ordinary processes of rational analysis, as it is because the opinion that they are thus super-rational is so deeply implanted in our ordinary thinking as not easily to be uprooted. We have so long associated the "higher" elements of poetry with things which are to be apprehended but vaguely, and then rather through the emotions than by the reason, that the attempt to set for them the common limitations of rational phenomena seems like the profanation of a mystery. "Vex not the poet's mind," is the petulant cry of the poet himself, when Reason with her compass and square attempts to measure his poetic architecture, and *Poeta nascitur non fit* has

long frowned like a warning notice-board to the would-be trespasser upon the poet's domain.

We are told that "poetry is a thing of God"; that it is "the finer spirit of knowledge"; that it is "something divine"; that it is "the opposition of science"; that it is "the inner thought of things"; that it is "the completest expression of humanity"; that it is "the language of ideality"; that it is "the expression of the inner motions of the soul."

These are but a few of the vague and meaningless forms of literary expression that so-called definitions of poetry take. Let us examine them for a moment.

As "a thing of God," poetry should be inspired; what evidence is there for supposing that poetry is inspired? Such a question inevitably brings the reply that this is a "figurative" expression; reduced to ordinary proportions it merely means that poetry is, somehow or other, associated with the "good" as ethically understood. The "finer spirit of knowledge" suggests a coarser spirit of knowledge; and having passed over the difficulty of fixing the "spirits of knowledge," what is the basis of distinction between these two? If "finer spirit of knowledge" means knowledge in its intimate relations to the issues of human life, — and that is about all it

can mean, — this knowledge is not peculiar to poetry; nay, rather, it may be claimed as the prerogative of prose — such prose, for example, as is found in the New Testament.

Again, if it is the "opposition of science," in what ways is it opposed to science? And if opposed to science, how can it be any kind of a "spirit of knowledge," let alone the "finer spirit of knowledge"? If it is the "inner thought of things," what is the outer thought of things? Or what, indeed, is the "thought" of things? If it is "the completest expression of humanity,"[1] what are the various incomplete expressions of humanity; and why does not history take the form of poetry?

The "language of ideality" is meaningless as it stands, for by the very nature of human thinking processes there can be no such thing as a language of ideality. If it intends a declaration that only poetry contains the expression of humanity's highest ideals, that is not true. If it means to say that poetry is the fittest vehicle for the expression of these ideals, that is a mere state-

[1] This definition comes somewhere near intelligibility if we substitute for "expression of humanity" "expression of the highest interests of humanity"; but even then it is not quite true, for some of the highest interests of humanity have been expressed in prose form.

ment of opinion, and not a definition at all. We are told that it is "the inner motions of the soul" that are the subjects for poetry's expression. But what are these "inner motions of the soul"? If "motions" means aspirations, one would expect poetry to be the apocalypse of humanity. But who can maintain that it is? Unfortunately for such a thesis, the highest revelation of this ideal that humanity has yet known is couched in a rather simple form of Greek prose. If "motions" means "movements" or "stirrings," we should expect to find in poetry the vehicle for the very outpourings of the heart of the race. But this thesis would be as hard to maintain as the other. It is not Shakspere that is read at death-beds, when heart pours itself out to heart in longings well nigh unutterable, but the Bible or the Book of Common Prayer.

Even if we accept these definitions at their face value, they help us little to an understanding of poetry. They do not define or delimit at all; for they are either mere emotional expressions of opinion, or vague enumerations of non-significant facts. A cursory examination of them shows that our notions of poetry have been literary, not scientific; that they are based upon the emotional susceptibility of the individual to respond to poetic phenomena, and not upon the absolute and cath-

olic concepts of science. Their distinctions being *a priori*, they have little to do with the history of the development of poetry in the life of man, and if one attempts to analyze their data, they immediately fall into metaphysical categories, too subtle and evanescent for purposes of scientific research.

To use Bacon's classification of the fundamental fallacies which beset human thinking to make it unscientific, the very fundamental notion of poetry is an *idolum tribus*. To say that the phenomena of poetry are "divine" and transcend the analytical powers of the human reason, is merely to illustrate that proneness of the human mind to resort to supernatural explanations of phenomena not immediately and easily assignable to a cause, which Bacon called the *idolum tribus*.

The derived judgments which flow from this assumption amount to little more than mere expressions of opinion: "I think this or that poem divinely beautiful, it contains elements which appeal to my sense of poetic beauty, it is therefore a great poem." Or, "This or that verse pleases my 'outer' sense of harmony and my 'inner' sense of the fitness of things, it is therefore a beautiful verse." These and such like are but *idola specus* — mere fallacious opinions dependent upon the inherent predispositions of the individual.

Such so-called definitions as those we just cited, mere statements of personal opinion clothed in a loose and vague literary phraseology through which words are wrested to unusual senses, like "poetry is the opposition of science," are excellent examples of *idola fori*, the misleading fallacies of verbal discussion.

When these are formulated *ex cathedra* from the elevated chair of the professional critic as final and absolute dicta to be taken on authority, — the authority of the professional critic's genius for criticism, — we have Bacon's *idola theatri*, the fallacy of the academic theatre. Thus in our fundamental conceptions of the nature and characteristics of poetry we run Bacon's entire gamut of fallacious reasoning.

It is but natural that the ancient notions of the subject should have been vague and unscientific. Unusual coördinations of intellectual powers combining to produce striking or unusual effects were then easily "divine mysteries," and the assumption of a divine influence working upon the poet was an easy explanation of his poetry. The fact that this power of endowing expressions of thought with a pleasing peculiarity of form was always associated with a quickness of imagination which set ideas in new relations to experience, was only corroboration of the theory of divine origin.

Such a theory was then almost the only one possible. To make poetry in any language demands a correlation of mental powers, the possession of which is comparatively rare, even at this present day. And these mental activities involve a rapidity and perfection of mental processes which even our modern psychology has failed to explain satisfactorily. It is not to be wondered at that the minds of the Greeks and Romans, who brought the supernatural into almost every relation of human life, should assume that the difficulty and comparative rarity of poetry was evidence of its divine origin. Moreover, poetic forms of expression have from the earliest times been cherished as being more interesting and more valuable than any other form of utterance. To think of poetry as divinely inspired was only another way of attesting its value.

That our English poetry in its earliest development escaped this process, was due to its practical application. It was the handmaid of war, rather than of religion, and dealt largely with concrete and tangible notions. The poet, therefore, was the craftsman who, by his skill in joining words taken from his rich storehouse, celebrated the deeds of his lord and gained his meed of rings like any other warrior-friend of his chieftain. Not until the influence of classic literature begins to

make itself felt in England, does the notion of the inherent divinity of poetic forms of expression appear in our literature.

The transplanting took place all the more easily from the influence of Christianity. The "high seriousness" of poetry and the supreme interest and ethical value of much poetic literature, strongly supported the classical assumption. Add to this the peculiar mnemonic value of the poetic form to convey important truths when all such conveyance is necessarily oral, and it is easy to see how this notion of the supernatural distinction of poetic forms should take hold in literature. We scarcely realize how strong this notion is. Who, for instance, in reading Milton's invocation at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, is aware that Milton's thought is neither English nor Christian, but pure paganism in a Hebrew dress?

For this notion of the supernatural character of poetic phenomena is as little Christian as it is English. The poetic books of the Bible have no extraordinary validity of inspiration on account of their poetic form. Nor does the Founder of Christianity ever stoop to give added literary interest to thought which is already pregnant with the issues of human destiny. He is the "Word" — the very thought of God; but nowhere is he the "Well-ordered Word," or the "Beautiful

Word." His words are the "Words of Life," and of paramount human interest, but nowhere do they fall into the poetic forms recognizable by Greeks or Hebrews. He speaks as never man spake, but not in the language of poetry. It was his words that moved the two disciples on the walk to Emmaus till their hearts burned within them, but we are not told that they were words such as poets use. The Hebrews had a poetry that was marvellous in its power — a moving order of rhythmic thought that still stirs with its majestic march of ideation an æsthetic sentiment quite unused to its poetic form; but there is not the faintest association between this poetic form and the form of expression men would attribute to God, did God speak the speech of men.

This notion, then, of the divinity of poetic forms of expression and the supernatural origin of poetry is not one which is justified by the authority to which we look for categoric expressions about divine matters, but is a foreign and pagan notion perpetuated in English minds by literary tradition from classical sources.

Perhaps, however, while the notion lacks corroboration from such a source, it is in the main a true one? It is true that the effect of poetry cannot be secured by the observance of any mechanical body of rules now known to men. There are no

simple recipes for its production. After all, then, is not *Poeta nascitur non fit* a valid expression of common judgment?

Yes, as far as it goes. But it only goes so far as to state that the poet possesses a peculiar endowment, not to be acquired in a single generation by ordinary training. That is all. What it arrogates to the poet, however, is not peculiar to the maker of poetry. Any craftsman may show similar adaptations not to be acquired in a single generation by formal training, without startling us into an admission that his peculiar power is divine and passes the understanding of the reason. We say a man is a "born" mechanic. We see in our children various fortunate adaptations of mental and physical powers which fit them for peculiar activities in life, without being astonished at their genius or claiming for ourselves peculiar virtues of parenthood because this genius happens to be reposed in our children. Such peculiar adaptations are the rule, rather than the exception. And if the poet is *deum certissima proles*, his 'spark of diviner fire' is but the dowry which heredity and environment impartially confer upon the children of men.

But if we say that the peculiar importance of the poet's message as an ethical interpretation of life justifies our assumption of something in his

mental and spiritual constitution that is supernatural, the answer is that we are grossly exaggerating the importance of poetry's influence upon life in obedience to certain literary traditions. Carefully examined in the light of "dry" understanding, this ethical importance dwindles away into insignificance. We can easily conceive of men who never had read a verse of poetry acting up to the highest ethical ideals human nature is capable of. Even if the ethical significance of poetry were far greater than it is, we should have no right to assume for it a supernatural origin in virtue of its great significance.

Now this notion of supernatural inspiration for poetry does not categorically enter into the thinking of most of us as a logical principle from which we start to explain poetic phenomena, but it no less enters into the fabric of our thinking through the connotations of the words we employ in our explanations. It makes us loath to consider the phenomena of poetry as natural phenomena subject to natural law, creating in us a reluctance to submit them to the ordinary processes of analytic reasoning. And it furnishes us with a refuge when we are hard pressed among the difficulties of an abstruse subject, full of subtle and fugitive distinctions, by enabling us to resort to the vagueness of a literary terminology. In

his latter indirect use it is even more mischiev-
us than it would be if formally stated as a dis-
inct proposition.

Our general notions of the nature of poetic
henomena are thus quite valueless for the study
f poetry: it were little wonder, then, did we fail
o classify and describe the essential characteristics
f our own poetry. And we do so fail: we miss
ntirely, when we come to the practical study of
, some of its most essential and significant fea-
ures. For the development of our poetry, looked
t from this metaphysical standpoint, presents a
wildering confusion of conflicting detail, and in
r study of it the inherent clash of opinion and
t forces us continually to invoke the metaphys-
l *deus ex machina.*

As we now study it, English prosody is merely
application, with some modifications, of classic
ody to English rhythms. This application
upon the wrong and misleading assumption
all the forms of æsthetic appeal suitable to
y are essentially the same in character,
hat one system of notation and one body
tinctions will serve equally for Latin or
h.

a formal system of English poetic theory it
rom the latter part of the sixteenth cen-

tury. English literature was then awaking to consciousness of form with a poignant awareness of model and rule that marks the dawn of English criticism. It was but natural that in seeking for model and rule English theorists should turn to classic sources. The history of English poetry was a blank. Chaucer was read, it is true, but as Elizabethan English: a knowledge of Old English speech was the possession of a few scholars, and they theologians; Old English poetry was as yet a dark mystery. English literature was still labouring under the stigma of vulgarity and barbarism. English models and English rules were therefore out of the question as the basis of a formal theory of poetry.

Sixteenth-century theorists, however, early recognized the fact that, while quantity seemed to be present in English verse, its use as a means of determining the external character of verse was attended with certain difficulties. The chief difficulty lay in the fact that there were in English speech a great number of commonly used monosyllables whose quantity, to say the least, was doubtful; and to place such words in positions where their vowels would come before two consonants or not, as the case might be, did not help matters. There were two ways out of this difficulty: either to follow a strictly quantitative

system and establish by absolute prescription the quantity of these doubtful syllables; or to abandon the strict construction of Latin quantitative rules, and admit accent as the determining characteristic of English verse, retaining certain selected classic prosodic forms, the iambus, the trochee, and the dactyl, according to which the accentually determined feet were arranged, and employing classic nomenclature to describe them.

The first system, after some struggle to establish it, was finally abandoned as being impracticable, so obviously at variance was it with the laws of English speech development. Moreover, it had been constantly and continuously violated by all the best English poets. The other became standard, and is still the one we use, with some further necessary modifications, to explain the phenomena of our poetry.

According to this theory an English unaccented syllable corresponds to a classic short syllable, and an English accented syllable corresponds to a classic long syllable. A great deal of printer's ink has been wasted in trying to show that this is really the case in English speech; in other words, that accent lengthens a syllable. But despite all *a priori* argument, the observant student of English can easily see that the principle is not true, and the historical student of English knows that

it is diametrically opposed to the most salient facts of English speech development.

Almost any line of English verse will show indubitably long syllables in the so-called "thesis" of the "foot" and indubitably short syllables in the "arsis." Take, for instance,

> "Five years have past; five summers, with the length
> Of five long winters."

Five, with an apparently long vowel (really the diphthong *ai*), is twice used in the "unaccented" part of a foot, and once in the accented part; *sum-*[1], and *win-* show obviously short syllables in the "accented" portions of the feet. And this is only one of thousands of like instances that might be cited.

Obviously the length or shortness of an English syllable has nothing to do with the determination of the forms of English verse.

It follows from this that classic prosody, whose laws and nomenclature depend entirely upon the fundamental principle that quantity, or length of syllables, determines the units of verse, can have no application whatever to English poetry, even when accentual are substituted for quantitative relations.

[1] There are only three consonants in the word, the double *m* being a mere graphic representation of the shortness of the *u*.

If, therefore, the laws and nomenclature of classical poetry are used to describe the phenomena of English verse, they will not describe those phenomena in terms that are at all essential in determining the character of English verse. The truth of this is illustrated most clearly by the facts themselves. Take, for example, the verse,

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought."

Our Renaissance prosody tells us that it is an "iambic pentameter" (but it begins with a "trochee"); compare it with some other "iambic pentameter," *e.g.* with the first verse of

"High on a throne of royal state that far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus or of Ind."

According to our prosody, these two verses are precisely the same, and are both of them to be represented by

$$-\cup\cup-\cup-\cup-\cup-.$$

Yet any one who has a good ear for English poetry will recognize the fact that the two are entirely different in their rhythmic character.

Again take

"The cowslips tall her pensioners be,
In their gold coats spots you see"

and

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are."

With the exception that in the first of these couplets the poet has allowed himself the "license" of using an "anacrusis," our prosody recognizes no difference between the two.

Yet they are not less unlike than are

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori"

and

"Integer vitæ scelerisque purus."

No student of the classics would think of putting these verses in the same category. Yet the English student must put the English pairs in the same category, for his prosody cannot recognize any difference between them.

In describing the essential characteristics of English verse, our English prosody is far inferior to the classic prosody on which it is based, for even the mere scansion of two hexameter verses which belonged to the same prosodic category would, to the Roman eye, immediately describe their inherent differences. But to our modern democratic system of English prosody, all the verses of a poem which happen to have the same number of feet are alike.

It is not worth while to enlarge upon this inadequacy. For outside the schoolroom few of us make any effort to use our prosody as a means of appreciating more keenly the beauty of English poetry. There are two reasons for it. The

first lies in a perversity that marks most of our elementary study of English — an ignorant or prejudiced inability to consider our speech and its literature in the light of their development. We learn that "iambuses," "trochees," "dactyls," and the like, determine the character of classic poetry, and we do not see why they should not equally well apply to our own verse. And the second lies in the fact that we begin to study English rhythms with the notion that they are made of "feet," and that "feet" are composed of two kinds of components, — two sorts of units, — syllables that are "accented," and syllables that are "not accented." With a system of nomenclature derived from the study of quantitative poetry, and an idea of mechanical verse-units composed of A and Not-A, we could hardly expect English prosody to be anything different from what it is, — academic, mechanical, valueless.

Our poetry has a longer and richer connected history than has that of any other nation of western Europe, yet we consider only that part of it which we happen to be able to read off-hand and without study; when we do take the pains to examine the earlier stages of our poetry's development, it is always to read it as if it were a crude kind of modern English, and thus to miss most

of its finer qualities. We have but a vague notion of the meanings of its words, and scarcely any notion at all of its rhythmic movement, and our study yields little of value. It is only a few years since the greatest of English critics, in discussing Chaucer's matchless rhythm, showed clearly that he could not read Chaucer as well as a schoolboy can read Vergil.

All the rich evidence, therefore, which shows the origin and development of our poetry goes for naught; and we are content to twist the marvellously complex and varied forms of its verse into a few selected classic modes, which have no relation whatever to them, and satisfy ourselves with perceiving such facts as that some verses in Shakspere's dramas have ten syllables and others eleven, or that *Paradise Lost* is written in lines of ten syllables, making five feet, each of which can be represented by ⏑ –, in which the breve stands for an unaccented syllable and the macron for an accented syllable, though macrons and breves have really nothing to do with accent, and accent is not the determining element of English verse forms.

The English scholarship of recent years has disclosed an interesting mass of material, which throws light on the development of our forms of poetry. This material has been more or less adequately discussed by English scholars. But our

education in respect to poetry, as, indeed, is true of our English education in general, remains almost entirely innocent of a knowledge of these scientific results; and as our children are taught their native language much as they were a hundred years ago, passing through all the graduated tortures of a Middle English spelling-book and a Renaissance grammar, so they learn, as an explanation of its poetry, a sixteenth-century prosody that might have been written by Puttenham or Ascham before Shakspere was born.

Such a mechanical and inconsequent education in respect to prosody leaves little behind it, and even that little soon disappears when the maturer mind recognizes its inapplicability. We take our poetry as we drink the air, or we leave it alone. We do not study it.

CHAPTER II

ELEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

OUR first duty, then, if we are to attain to a clear knowledge of poetry, is to divest the subject of all these uncertain and misleading conceptions as to the nature of its phenomena. Even if there are in it elements which we cannot know definitely and discern scientifically, it behooves us to begin with the known and the knowable, exhausting these before proceeding to the other.

That there are elements in poetry which are easily and clearly knowable is not to be disputed. But to grasp these elements clearly, we must get rid of the poet. We must conceive of poetry as a body of related phenomena presenting common characteristics and showing evidence of the operation of definite law, and not as a series of sporadic exhibitions of peculiar mental activity on the part of certain individuals possessed of "genius."

Looking at our subject in this way, we see that certain forms of thought-expression are selected by men to be made permanent and general; and that some of these forms of generalized thought-expression are peculiar in being capable of arous-

ing highly pleasurable emotions in the individual, whenever they pass through his mind; and that to these forms of expression men agree in attaching peculiar importance. It is these forms themselves and their relation to the human mind that we must study, not the persons who make use of them.

Now this is not so easy as it appears to be. For poetry has so long been studied from the standpoint of the poet that some effort is required to escape from him. We are so impressed by the power of poetry that we think of it as something made by a wonderful and unusual person: we do not realize the fact that all the wonder and marvel is in our own brains, that the poet is ourselves. He speaks our language better than we do merely because he is more skilful with it than we are; his skill is part of our skill, his power of our power; generations of English-speaking men and women have made us sensible to these things, and our sensibility comes from the same source that the poet's power of stimulating it comes from. Given a little more sensitiveness to external stimuli, a little more power of associating ideas, a coördination of the functions of expression somewhat more apt, a sense of rhythm somewhat keener than the average — given these things, we should be poets, too, even as he is. He makes nothing,

creates nothing; he is but one of us. He only seems marvellous to us because he is so much like us. Were he very different, he would be mad, — mad to the point of unintelligibility, as he often comes to be, — a *vatus insanus*.

It is really ourselves who make poetry — it is non-existent until we have responded to it. As in the case of all literature, indeed in the case of all so-called "art," what makes it is not the artist, but his audience. Perhaps this is the explanation of the artist's loathness that we should peep behind his scenes; the explanation, too, of that phenomenon through which things ugly and unintelligible become for a season the highest expression of "beauty." Persuaded that all art is transcendent mystery, we think that these ugly and unintelligible things are forms of mysteriously perfect loveliness because the artist (or his unaccredited agent) tells us to think so, and the artist should surely know!

In the case of true art as in the case of sham art, the art lies in the beholder; the difference between the two is only the difference between responding to an appeal because that appeal is directed to natural æsthetic judgments, and responding to an appeal because it is directed to artificial æsthetic opinions. As there can be no music without an ear to hear it, so there can

be no poetry without a mind fitted and prepared to respond to it. The preparation, as we have said, may be natural or it may be artificial; we may be indoctrinated to give our answer or we may give it from our hearts. But it is in our answer that the marvel lies, not in the poet: he may come and go, and the world know little of him, but the poetry abides.

It is important for us, therefore, if we think of poetry as one of the fine arts, to guard against the mistake of confusing the artist with the art. It is a pity that our language so insists upon regarding the phenomena of what we call "fine art" from the standpoint of the artist, that is, from the standpoint of their second cause. An art is really a skilful way of doing something, a fine art a skilful way of appealing to the æsthetic sentiment. The natural tendency in considering a skilful way of doing something is to marvel at the skill of the doer. This is all very well if we are studying the thing done with a view to doing it ourselves; we naturally study the doer — how he did the thing. But when we approach poetry, not as something done by certain individuals that we too should like to do, but as something that affects our lives and the lives of many like us in a way that we would understand — when we look at the subject from the scientific point of view, the

artist disappears. It is no longer a thing done and its doer that we are interested in, but a general human experience and its cause. We must not let the word "art" impose upon us, therefore: or, to use the fine phraseology of Bacon, we must at the very outset of our study guard against an *idolum fori.*

Our supreme question, then, is not how the poet happened to write his poetry, or what sort of a mind — or "soul" — he had, or whence he came, or whither he went. His "inspiration" and his "message" are alike of no importance to us as students. But our duty is to determine what are the elements in poetry which stir our emotions; how these elements come to move us; their nature — whether fundamental and generic, or developed and particular; if the latter, the course of the development; and the relation of these elements to those of other forms of expression not poetic.

In short, our problem is merely the great problem of science — what are the phenomena? how are they related? whence arising? whither tending? We cannot answer all of these questions, nor even one of them fully; but we can reduce the subject to such scientific order as will yield intelligible results.

Our method of study must be like that of biol-

ogy, not like that of metaphysics, for the development of poetry is intimately associated with the subtlest activities of the most complex arrangement of life-material known to man. We see this life-material constantly clothing itself in all manner of bewildering forms, whose meanings and adaptations we strive to unravel and understand in the hope of ultimately learning the great secret of the universe.

The physical forms (as we call them) of this continuous incarnation are the more obvious. But the spiritual forms are none the less a part of the process. And poetry, as one of these — perhaps the subtlest and finest — will never be fully understood so long as it is considered apart and distinct from the other efforts of the soul of the universe as it seeks a full utterance and finds it not. The one group of phenomena are as much an effect of actions and reactions as the other — ultimately the methods of studying both should be the same.

But if this doctrine be too hard for us, let us try a simpler; and for the moment let us think of a chemist studying some compound with which he is unfamiliar. His first effort under such circumstances would be analytic; he would try to tear this compound thing apart

and see if there were not revealed in the process some elements which he was already familiar with. Having found these, he would carefully re-study them to make sure that he fully understood their properties. Then he would combine them with the *tertium quid*, and study its behaviour as it united with them, gaining thereby at least a working knowledge of the unknown thing.

Without assuming that this method of the chemist's will entirely reveal to us the knowledge of English poetry which we seek, let us try the method merely as an experimental test to give us a *pou sto* for working out our problem.

Starting, then, with an expression of thought which admittedly contains the elements of poetry, let us take a passage from *Macbeth* (III. 2. 22 ff.), and submit it to our test: —

> "Duncan is in his grave;
> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
> Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
> Can touch him further."

We shall not be displaying overmuch sagacity if we notice that the peculiarity of this expression of thought which is most striking, and therefore most likely to be essentially poetic, depends upon a peculiar order of arrangement in respect to the

succession of its words. Let us, therefore, without essentially changing the form of expression itself, eliminate this peculiar element. We shall have left something like this: —

"Duncan lies in his grave. Life that racks my soul with succeeding ague-fits of fear,[1] for him is over and he sleeps in peace beyond the reach of treason. The assassin's steel or poisoned cup, secretly fomented strife at home, treacherously assisted hostility from abroad — none of these can harm him now."

But this form of thought-expression still smacks of books; it still contains so-called literary qualities, which may conceal hidden poetic elements. Let us, therefore, eliminate these qualities also,

[1] "Life's fitful fever" is one of those Shakspere-phrases that have gone bodily into our vocabulary with generalized connotations; one thinks now of "the changing and feverish anxieties of life." But in Macbeth's mind it had close association with the paroxysms of "fever and ague." Cf. Comenius, *Janua* 1643: "A burning fever hanteth a man alwaies alike, and cometh not by fits with some certaine space between. An ague [*febris intervallata* in medical diagnosis] turns with fresh fits, but keeps no set time." See also —

"This ague-fit of fear is over blown,"
Richard II., III. 2. 190;

and

"Danger, like an ague, subtly taints
E'en then when we sit idly in the sun,"
Troilus, III. 3. 232.

I therefore translate the expression into its original terms.

as far as we can. Our statement, thus reduced to one of mere crude, non-literary, obviously non-poetic fact, becomes —

"The life of Duncan is extinct, and he is no longer affected by the personal vicissitudes and dangers of government, such as assassination, treason, rebellion, and foreign invasion, which produce this anxiety in my mind."

We thus have the thought-material of this passage from Shakspere in three states, as we might call them, viz.: —

1. A crude statement of a fact related to Macbeth's experience.
2. A statement of this fact in what is called literary form, which may be suspected of containing some elements of poetry.
3. A statement of this fact in a form that no one would be rash enough to call unpoetic.

These three states are what we might call three successive stages. We have first a simple stage, presenting elements which we are all familiar with; we have a second stage in which there appears a certain new element with which we are most of us familiar; we have a third stage in which there appears a second new element, the nature of which we are trying to investigate.

Let us take up these three successive stages

and examine them as carefully as we can in their relation to this subject of poetry.

Beginning with the first: —

"The life of Duncan is extinct, and he is no longer affected by the personal vicissitudes and dangers of government, such as assassination, treason, rebellion, and foreign invasion, which produce this anxiety in my mind."

We have here, as we have said, the plain statement of a thought suggested to Macbeth's mind by the realization of his own danger and the inquietude of his ill-gotten kingship. There is nothing unusual in it to attract our attention; for any one who had murdered an innocent and just king to obtain his crown, would naturally be exposed to the same dangers and feel the same inquietude. There is nothing in the idea to awake our sympathy; for Macbeth's conduct deserves just such a retribution — let him bear the due punishment of his guilt. It is a natural idea under the circumstances and of significance and interest to no one save Macbeth and, perhaps, the psychologist. It speaks to us, therefore, in impersonal terms — in terms of x, as it were.[1] It obviously contains none of the poetic

[1] It is not possible quite to reduce it to the absolute simplicity which we might desire. To do this we should have to give it such scientific formulation that its terms would be entirely un-

elements that we are seeking. We may therefore dismiss it without further comment.

Now let us take up the second stage of our idea.

"Duncan lies in his grave. Life that racks my soul with succeeding ague-fits of fear, for him is over, and he sleeps in peace beyond the reach of treason. The assassin's steel or poisoned cup, secretly fomented strife at home, treacherously assisted hostility from abroad — none of these can harm him now."

related to individual human experience and quite free from emotional implications. We should have to describe scientifically the state of deadness — in terms of biology, for instance; we should have to define the notion of anxiety in terms of psychology; moreover, we should have to put our scientifically purified notions in such relation to one another that the sum total would stand for exactly what it was, without added elements of literary grace springing from desire to arrange the several parts of our idea so that they would appeal to literary prejudices, and awake other than scientific interests. In other words, it is quite impossible entirely to remove literary elements from a thought formulated in our ordinary English language, for the words of our common English speech are largely acquired through personal experience and not by learning definitions out of a dictionary. They come into our minds "trailing clouds of glory," and to remove this "glory-haze" is the hardest problem of expression science has to confront. We must remember, however, that our test is only a preliminary one, designed to bring before our minds the essential elements of our problem of poetry, and not a chemical test for the absolute determination of ingredients. It will be sufficient for our purpose, therefore, if we reduce our original thought to such simple terms as would make it unlikely that any one would take it for literature. And we may safely assume that we now have our thought in this stage.

Some new element is here obviously present, because this formulation affects us differently from the other. What is there in it that was not in the other? Certainly not fresh information: the thought-material has remained the same. The change must therefore be in the way the thought is put. If we examine the various notions carefully, we shall see that the words representing them are no longer denotative, *i.e.* exact representations of the particular things and relations intended, marking them off from all others like them; but are now connotative, *i.e.* representations in the rough, including many things and relations not properly a part of the intended idea. Our ordinary English speech is largely made up of connotative terms; for we acquire our common knowledge through our own personal experience and state it in terms of this experience. The physician, for instance, gets accustomed to thinking of death as the negation of a life principle,— a cessation of life functions; he gets this notion by studying death as a fact unrelated to his personal experience, and he defines it with as accurate denotations as his scientific terminology will allow. If death were to him as a physician what it is to you and to me his patients, he would be forever running the risk of getting his judgment mixed up with his emotions, and not doing all

that he might do to save us from death. To us, and to the physician, too, as one of us, "death" is associated with a group of poignant experiences, and we never know what the word means until we go through these experiences for ourselves. It is to us, therefore, the denotation of a condition by means of a group of emotional connotations attached to personal experiences. The physician says to his brother physician, "Cardiac action has ceased" (or something of that sort); he tells us, "The man is dead."

With this distinction in mind, let us take up the first phrase of this Macbeth-Duncan idea in its second stage.

We have here the notion of a person lying in what the Oxford dictionary tells us is "an excavation in the earth for the reception of a corpse," and the person mentioned is represented as having in this some proprietary possession. But 'cast in the soul's rich mine' the notion comes up 'crusted o'er with gems.' This "grave" with a determining word attached, "my mother's grave," "my father's grave," "his son's grave" (— see how Shakspere plays on the string in *Richard II.*, III. 3. 153: "My large kingdom for a little grave, A little, little grave, an obscure grave!") makes a direct appeal to personal experience. While to the dictionary it is "an excavation in the

earth for the reception of a corpse," to you and me (and we are all the world where literature is concerned) it is — perhaps — an oblong yellowish hole on a bleak hillside; cutting sleet driving into the face of a black-clad man who is reading something that seems to be of importance out of a little book; other black-clothed people shivering in the distance; a yellow box into which they have put what hitherto has been the light of our life; a sharp thud that closes for the rest of time a door hitherto always open, and bolts and bars it beyond the hope of another entrance; a dull, irresponsive mound of earth or green grass, quite unlike all the other earth and grass in the world — it's something like that to most of us, this "his" or "her grave." The background of the picture may be different, but the scene is ever the same — has been and will be to the end of time — there is no single exception in the annals of men. That is why you and I are the whole world where literature is concerned.

Now this is perhaps an extreme case that we have happened to hit on in choosing this thought from *Macbeth*. And in different minds the connotation of this word "grave" might have a more or less degree of poignancy to affect emotion, according to the sensitiveness of the individual or the depth to which he was in the habit of

allowing such ideas to penetrate his consciousness. Much, too, depends upon the condition of his emotions at the time he reads — the preparedness, so to speak, of the ground on which the word falls. But prepared or unprepared, susceptible or insensible to emotion, "Duncan is in his grave" is quite a different form of expression from "The life of Duncan is extinct," though the idea in each is the same.

The rest of our passage in its second stage only makes more clearly apparent the addition of Human Interest which we have endeavoured to describe. The sleep of death after the fitful fever of life, the eternal refuge from life's malice and envy — the malice and envy which beset a king; the assassin's steel or poisoned cup; treacherously fomented strife at home, treacherously assisted attack from abroad — all these notions teem with emotional associations.

And these emotional associations not only make the thought interesting to us by provoking in our minds various emotional states, — they also make it interesting to us by making us more or less the sharers of Macbeth's feeling. If we may be allowed to force a little the meaning of the word "interest," we may say that we are not only "mixed up" with the notions of the words themselves, but we are also "mixed up"

with the speaker's relations to the things the words represent. So that Macbeth goes not alone and unaccompanied to his final damnation, but draws us along as protesting witnesses crying for the mitigation of his inevitable punishment — the very essence of tragedy.

This determining quality of literature, this Human Interest, is that common and general interest which its thought possesses for all men who think, regardless of those peculiar attitudes toward life that arise from peculiar pursuits and occupations. In this sense, the general human interests of literature are quite different from the peculiar interests of science. Thought to have this Human Interest must be put in such an environment of association that it will appeal to the general and common experience of the race. I might say, for instance, —

"The natural and normal condition of man is to be a producer in some field or other of activity."

I should here be making a statement which would have a peculiar interest for the economist; for he is a student of "man," seeking to reduce him to "normal conditions," and habitually thinking of him as a "producer" of things in various "fields of activity." As far as Human Interest is concerned such a thought passes over us as the wind blows, and we go on our several ways quite un-

concerned by our responsibilities as "producers in fields of activity."

But we are all of us, including the economist, "creatures of the living God"; we "play our parts" upon a "stage of life"; we have not forgotten what "onlooking angels" are; we know what it means to "stand before" the "all-seeing and unescapable eyes" of this "living God" and his "beholding angels." I need only put these ideas together in the form (it is Bacon's, not mine)

> "But men must know that in this theatre of man's Life, it is reserved only for God and Angels to be lookers on"

to make your human soul fairly tingle with emotion, though you are this high-sounding personage who produces in fields of activity. I put you on your stage; I place the living God and his beholding angels in the seats of the onlookers; I set your scene, and willy nilly, you must play it out, bunglingly or fittingly, till you reach your exit, regardless of your claim to belong in the spectators' seats, and despite your childish efforts to sneak into the audience.

And who am I to do all this? I am you — certain unescapable yesterdays of loves and hates, of hopes and fears, — records which you have printed on your consciousness in the characters of

English speech. And words like these will make you turn and read them again.

Without prolonging illustrations, we may designate this quality of thought-expression Human Interest, and we may quite fittingly represent it by the letters HI; and for the sake of brevity and succinct formulation, we may say that a thought-expression which has Human Interest in marked degree has been put in terms of x + HI.

But let us return to our original thought-material, Macbeth's thought about Duncan, in the second form which we gave it. If we examine it in its x + HI form, we shall see clearly that it is not what any one would call poetry. We may call the new element in it a "creation," a "making," a veritable ποίησις, if we will, either with reference to the idea or with reference to the effect of the idea on our consciousness; but we cannot call the expression itself "poetry." If we do, all literature is poetry. We cannot obtain, then, any clew to a knowledge of poetry by studying our thought in its x + HI form of expression, because there are no poetic elements to be found in it. Everything that is there we are quite familiar with outside the field of poetry. We recognize the thought merely as an idea in a form possessing literary potential, so to speak, and can readily conceive how this and other forms of properly connected and properly

related thought-expressions like it might make an interesting book—a novel, say. But as for recognizable poetry, there is none, and never will be so long as the thought remains in its second stage.

But there can be no doubt that elements of poetry are contained in our thought as it stands in *Macbeth*, III. 2. 22 ff.: —

"Duncan is in his grave; after life's fitful fever he sleeps well. Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison, malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing, can touch him further."

We are aware of them, even when, as here, the printer does not tell us that the passage is poetry.

Taking up our thought-material, in this its third stage, let us examine it in relation to the two previous stages; for the new elements which make our thought-material poetry must have been introduced after it left its second stage.

First as to the idea itself: "Duncan is in his grave" is practically the same as "Duncan lies in his grave," though the condition as represented by "is" is slightly more generic than that represented by "lies." "Life's fitful fever" as an Elizabethan expression is not substantially different from what we had before, though the expression is now more compact. As modern English, however, it teems with a human interest due to a

multitude of associations it has gathered up in human history since Shakspere's time. If we take this fact into account, we may say that this part of our idea has gained enormously in Human Interest. The notion of peaceful sleep following the paroxysms of the life-fever we also had before; "beyond the reach of treason" has taken on a different form, "treason has done his[1] worst," not an essentially different meaning, though the transference of the idea of treason into a more active category with a more concrete and personal significance is, perhaps, a gain in Human Interest. "The assassin's steel and poisoned cup" have been more closely linked together in the Elizabethan "nor — nor" construction, and the phrase is made sharper by leaving the assassin-notion to be suggested by the context. "Secretly fomented strife at home" appears as "domestic malice," a more tense expression due to the wider meaning of Elizabethan "malice," *i.e.* "influence for evil" rather than "general intention to do evil," so that the notion involved is quite the same as before. "Foreign levy" is also Elizabethan idiom for our somewhat cumbrous "preparations for invasion from abroad."

The idea, then, has remained substantially the same, though it has gained in intensity of Human

[1] *His* is Elizabethan English for 'its.'

Interest. This change in Human Interest is obviously due to the new form our material has taken. We cannot tell whether the change would always be attended by an increase in interest, as it obviously is here, or not; to find this out we should have to examine a large number of passages which admittedly had poetic form. If we did this, however, we should find that in the case of thought which had been adjudged to be the highest and best poetry, the Human Interest had been obviously intensified by the poetic form, and that in much of what men had agreed to call good poetry, the Human Interest of the thought had been as obviously weakened by the poetic form. And our conclusion would be that the Human Interest of the idea will vary according to the "quality" of the poetry.

But whether this is true or not, we have no new element in our third stage as far as idea is concerned, but still our $x + \mathrm{HI}$; though we do find our formula in an $x + \mathrm{HI}^n$ form, and if pressed to make our formula rigid, we should have to explain the quality of HI as a sort of indeterminate constant, an $\mathrm{HI}^{\delta n}$ as it were.

Then as to the form of expression. Is there anything new in the form of expression besides this element of intensified Human Interest? We have already noticed something peculiar in the

order of arrangement of its words, a peculiarity which we had little trouble in getting rid of. What is this element? It appears to be a more or less regular alternation between what we commonly call the accented and the unaccented impulses expressing our idea. We are quite sure of the quality of these impulses when they happen to fall on polysyllabic words — we know there is no such person as Dun-cán, nor any such word as af-tér, nor such a thing as a fit-fúl fe-vér. These are a sort of landmark for us, laying out a road of rhythm which we can follow, if we have what we call a good ear for rhythm, more or less easily. We see that these impulses are distributed so that (with certain exceptions or licenses) the accented and unaccented syllables alternate — or at least that seems to be the intention of the writer of the thought; we therefore make them alternate with more or less ease and fluency. But we are often puzzled to know how to place this so-called "accent," especially when it comes to a succession of monosyllables without landmarks. Is it

"Áfter life's fítful féver he sléeps well"?

Obviously not. Yet if "sleeps" and "life's" are not "accented" syllables they must be "unaccented" syllables; but neither you nor I ever

treat them as unaccented syllables in our ordinary thinking. Why should they be unaccented in poetry?

But at least we are sure that there is rhythm here of some sort, and that it is approximately regular. Suppose we ignore its irregularities for the present. Is it an essential element — a poetry-forming element? Undoubtedly. For if we remove it from our thought-formulation, we no longer have a form of expression which our minds will recognize as poetry. We can easily do this by altering the word order: —

"In his grave lies Duncan: he sleeps well after life's fitful fever. Treason has done his worst; nor poison nor steel, foreign levy, malice domestic, nothing can further harm him."

Our idea is practically back in its second stage. We can therefore set down as our first new element of poetry the one of *a peculiar arrangement of the thought-impulses in a more or less regular rhythmic order.*

Is there anything else? We have said that the printer helps us to recognize our passage as poetry. How does he do it? He divides it up into lines which originally are marked off for him by the poet. These are groups of "feet," as we call them, unaccented-followed-by-accented divi-

sions which the books call "iambuses." In this poetry there are five "iambuses" to the verse-turn where we begin to count again. Here we have another new element — the thought is divided up into groups of five. Is this also a poetry-forming element, or is it a mere arbitrary device of the poet's to please the eye?

Let us remove it, keeping as nearly as possible the same rhythm-sequence as we had before. Suppose we had

Dúncan is ín his gráve. Áfter the fítful | féver of lífe he sléeps in peáce. For treá | son nów has dóne its wórst — nor stéel nor póison, | málice doméstic, fóreign lévy, nothíng | can touch him fúrther.

and so on indefinitely — perfect continuous rhythm, adequately fulfilling English rhythm conditions. No printer's art could make this into anything more than rhythmic prose which the mind would never take for poetry.

Obviously, then, these rhythm-groups are not mere typographical devices to please the eye, but are essential to the very existence of poetry. We thus get as a second poetry-forming element *an arrangement of rhythm in a series of definite groups.*

If we look at "Duncan is in his grave," it seems to be a series beginning with what is called a "trochee," an accented-followed-by-unaccented

foot; the rest of the series runs off as usual. We note the same thing at the beginning of the next verse-group, "After, etc.," and similarly in the other verses. If we turn to the "Duncan is in his grave" phrase, as it stands in Shakspere, we see that it is not a new verse-group, but part of an old one. Similarly we should find all through Shakspere's poetry these "trochee" interpolations; but we should notice that they always occurred either at the beginning of a new verse, or at a point within the verse where the thought took a new turn, after a pause, whether such pause was noted in the print or not. We should not find, for instance, such verse as

> "The brief fever of life is past, and he
> Sleeps well."

The fact that this striking appearance of "trochees" in "iambic" verse is associated with the beginning of a new series of rhythm-impulses would lead us to suspect the existence of a sub-group within the larger verse-group. And this suspicion would be confirmed if we examined longer passages than this we have before us. We should notice that within the definite larger group of five there appeared smaller groups of rhythm-phrases whose sum was always coincident with the larger group. We cannot be so positive about the essential poetry-forming qualities of this ele-

ment as we have been about the others, because we find it absent in some forms of short verse-groups, and occasionally long verse-groups such as we have here are not so subdivided. But if we examine our poetry historically, we shall see that the sub-group is a most vital element in the history of its development, and that for the sort of poetry which we have before us — our finest poetic mode — it is an indispensable element. We can therefore conclude that the sub-grouping is normal, at least as far as our English poetry is concerned. Here, then, is another element in the arrangement of this thought-material as we have it in its third stage.

Now let us sum up these new elements. We have: —

1. A rhythm not quite regular, made up of certain rhythm-units whose nature we do not yet quite clearly understand.

2. A grouping of these units in fives.

3. A grouping of these units in minor divisions of this fixed five group.

But this is not all. If we take the verse-group

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well,"

and study it carefully, we shall see that the rhythms of its two parts are quite different in their effects; "After life's fitful fever" is itself

fitful in the flow of its rhythm, while "he sleeps well" is slow, and moves with a certain deliberation, culminating restfully. This becomes clear when we change the rhythmic expression to

"After life's fitful fever soundly sleeping."

The difference between the two consists in this: the one is in such form that it not only pleases our English "ears" (as we say), but this pleasing form is also what we might call "interesting." Long before coming in contact with this verse of Shakspere's, we have formed in our minds associations between notions of "fitfulness" and a certain succession of physical movements; likewise between "sleep" and a certain succession of physical movements. For instance, if I were speaking to you as an orator, I should use a series of jerky gestures to make you see, as it were, the "fitfulness" that I was speaking of, or I might move my hand in such a way that it would come slowly to a pause if I wanted to make you realize a sleep-notion. I should thus make my speech the more interesting to you. So the poet, in seeking to give his thought the most interesting form possible, moves its rhythm in such a way as to suggest fitting associations. There are thousands of instances of this in our best poetry, not mere sporadic examples of what

rhetoricians call "onomatopoetic" verses, but continuous and sustained rhythmic reflections of the poet's thought.

This element, which is a significant one for all good English poetry, occurs in non-poetically formulated thought as well. But in prose it is more or less of an accident due to normal emotional activities associated with intense thought, and not continuously reflecting them of set purpose.

While it is not of much consequence for us to have our formula accurate and complete, it may be worth our while to put it in such shape as will represent roughly, at least, the idea in our third stage, as far as our analysis of this third stage has proceeded. To do this we have only to bring together these formal elements of rhythm into some single expression. We might call them the Verse Form and represent them by VF. For the rest, our formula is still correct as it stands. Our formula, then, for poetry, or the third stage of our idea, will be $x + HI^n + VF$.

Our analysis has thus yielded the following elements of the problem that lies before us: —

1. The verse forms of English poetry:
 (*a*) the nature of their rhythms, and
 (*b*) the forms of grouping assumed by these rhythms.

2. The Human Interest of the idea as it is affected by the imposition of these verse forms, and the associated interest of the verse forms themselves as related to our experience.

Or, in other words, *the Verse and the varying intensity of Human Interest as affected by the verse.*

The question naturally arises, is there any *tertium quid* in poetry which we may have overlooked in this our preliminary experiment — some subtle element that might escape our notice here because so insignificant in this short passage of Shakspere?

Coleridge would tell us that we have overlooked the most vital element of all poetry, a composition which has a peculiar effect on the æsthetic sentiment, viz., an æsthetic composition such that the "greatest amount of pleasure derivable from the whole of it is consistent with the greatest amount of pleasure to be derived from the component parts." But this sort of æsthetic composition, this ideal proportion, is neither peculiar to poetry nor a vital element of poetry. If it were vital to poetry, we should have to say that such an expression of thought as

> "To be, or not to be: that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep;
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart ache, and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wished,"

was not poetic until we had restored it to its proper environment in the play of *Hamlet*, a view of poetry which would be palpably absurd. And if such a canon of poetry were a vital one, the whole question would be left to a determination by opinion of what this perfect proportion was — when the poet had hit it, when he had missed it. We could do nothing but assume that some so-called poems were perfect, and call imperfect all others in which there was any divergence of proportionate composition from the standard of our accepted norms.

In fact "the proof of vile taste" which Coleridge urges convicts just the greatest of our poetry; it condemns Chaucer, who never finished the *Canterbury Tales* and mixed up the stories he did write in such a confusion that they have not even yet been satisfactorily arranged so as to meet that æsthetic demand of "beauty of the whole" which Coleridge insists on. It condemns Spenser, who left his theme hanging in the air after he had written four books of the twenty-four he had planned. It condemns Shakspere, who wrote

with a supreme indifference to those unities of time and place which should form an important element in this beauty of the whole. It condemns Milton who wrote as an integral part of his "justification of the ways of God to man" a *Paradise Regained* which no one now reads. And what shall we say of a canon of criticism which, if it be strictly applied, strikes Chaucer and Spenser and Shakspere and Milton from the roster of our greatest poets!

The peculiar harmonious proportion of detail to whole is merely a general æsthetic interest not peculiar to poetry but shared in by all the fine arts. And that peculiar æsthetic interest in poetry which is due to verse form is not a completing harmony added to an æsthetic appeal imperfect without it, but is quite independent of other æsthetic interests which the poet's thought may contain in virtue of its being literature.

In our experiment, therefore, we have not overlooked a vital element of poetry because the verses we have chosen are such a brief example of poetry. And in it we have all and not only some of the vital elements of poetry, the removal of any one of which, as we have already pointed out, destroys the poetic character of the thought.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL ASPECTS AND LIMITATIONS OF POETRY

WHILE the verses from Shakspere which we have just examined (a few English words arranged in a way that is pleasing to English ears) are quite insufficient of themselves to give us an adequate idea of poetry in general, they nevertheless contain the essential characteristics of all poetry. We should find nothing essentially new if we took Homer, Dante, or Goethe, but essentially the same elements; an interesting thought in a beautiful form of expression. The interest of the thought might vary in different times and among different nations; the beautiful form might be a form far different from Shakspere's five-wave rhythm-series; yet the two elements, interest and beauty, would still be there; and the interest would be the interest of words and the beauty the beauty of well-ordered thought.

All through our experiment, rough and mechanical though it was, we tried to keep in the foreground these essential elements of poetry, and the fact that we were dealing with a beautiful thing, and not with a few verses from *Macbeth*.

Let us now, therefore, seek to determine in as wide and embracing a sense as we may what these elements are as they have taken to themselves their various forms in the history of poetry.

Perhaps we shall best be able to do this by conceiving our poetic phenomena as being subject to certain limitations marking them off from other groups of phenomena which are not poetic in character.

We have seen that the determining element in the undoubtedly poetic thought-expression which we had before us was what we called a Verse Form; that the removal of this Verse Form destroyed the evidently poetic character of the thought-formulation; that whatever other beauty it possessed, this was the determining beautiful form; that this Verse Form was a certain æsthetic (as we shall call it) arrangement of certain elements which were normally involved in the formulation of the thought, whether in poetic or in non-poetic expression.

Our fundamental principle, then, lies in the fact that poetry is an appeal to the æsthetic sentiment, and in dealing with poetry, therefore, we are dealing with phenomena which in some formal way appeal to the æsthetic sentiment.[1] Thought-

[1] The Æsthetic Sentiment is a distinct group of more or less common intellectual judgments, either original or acquired by

formulations which do not affect the æsthetic sentiment, therefore, do not concern us in an investigation of the nature of poetry. Whatever else poetry may be, an aid to the memory, a means of arousing emotion, a stimulus to sympathy, an interpretation of life, a revelation of beauty, — or any or all of these things, — it is primarily a mode of appeal to the æsthetic sentiment. This fact of itself makes poetry one of the fine arts, a position it has always held ever since men began to think about it in an effort to understand its ultimate nature.

But since the origin and nature of æsthetic judgments, and with them, therefore, the cri-

experience, or both, to which are referred certain perceptions of form and arrangement with a feeling of pleasure or repugnance. We may think of this Æsthetic Sentiment either as a certain definite province of intellectual activity, constituting, as it were, a tribunal to which such experiences are referred; or we may think of it as the synthesis of the intellectual activities of the mind in its capacity to receive, judge, interpret, and understand certain adaptations to its fundamental nature, or to its acquired experience, or to both, with a feeling of intellectual pleasure or the opposite. The full form of the phrase is Æsthetic Sentiment for Beauty; but since Aristotle's time the word æsthetic (perceptive) has had a peculiar connotation which positively involves a judgment of beauty, and also negatively implies a judgment of the opposite of beauty. So we can use the term "Æsthetic Sentiment" without attaching to it the phrase "for Beauty."

teria of beauty, are matters of which as yet we have little definite knowledge, must we not wait, some one may ask, until we know more about the ultimate nature of beauty before going into the question of the nature of poetry?

By no means. If we turn back to our experiment with the Macbeth-Duncan idea, we shall see that the æsthetic judgment involved in its third stage is confined to the appreciation of the succession and grouping of the rhythm-series in it. And if we consider a multitude of passages of poetry, we shall find the same thing true. Once granted that such a form of rhythm-sequence and group-arrangement as is present in the thought-formulation from *Macbeth* of itself produces a peculiar pleasure in an English mind, we need not further concern ourselves with absolute æsthetic judgments. Whether such an arrangement of rhythm-material would give pleasure to a Japanese mind or not, has really nothing to do with the science of English poetry; if we can once establish the fact that it appeals to an English æsthetic sentiment, we have a sufficient basis for the study of English poetry. How this fact comes to be, whether based upon an absolute æsthetic judgment of things beautiful, or merely due to a habit formed in successive generations of English minds, through which a peculiar æsthetic importance comes

to attach itself to an arrangement of normal English forms of expression in definite rhythmic series of five rising waves of attention-stress, — whether the fundamental judgment is absolute or relative, the result is the same. To object to a scientific study of English poetry because we cannot as yet demonstrate fully the ultimate nature of the absolute æsthetic judgment involved in this English predilection, would be much the same as objecting to a science of mathematics because we cannot prove that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. As far as English poetry is concerned, we may take as our starting-point the ultimate judgment that the perception of variously modulated successive groups of rhythmic impulses of attention-stress gives pleasure, and reduce the whole subject to definite scientific statement without once having recourse to other ultimate æsthetic judgments.

For, to use the language of psychology, the elements of beauty in poetry are not so much perceptive as they are conceptive. They have not so much reference to general and natural perceptions of beauty as they have to a past inherited or acquired æsthetic experience, which is unconsciously collated with the present one to the kindling of emotion. They depend largely upon the association of ideas. Even those elements of

beauty in poetry which are directly perceptive in the first place, become more or less conceptive as they develop through the experience of particular races.

This becomes clearly evident from the comparison of various bodies of national poetry. The beauty of Latin or of Greek poetic form is one which the English mind is more or less unresponsive to, and the appeal of Shakspere's verse is, *vice versa*, of a kind that the classic poet would be slow to recognize and entertain. And this is because the selected vehicles for the æsthetic appeal of poetry vary with different habits of thought collocation and with different conditions of speech development. And these limitations are so exigent that absolute judgments of æsthetic form play an insignificant part in the history of poetry as compared with the relative associations attached to the poetic form. There are cases in the history of poetry where the mode and material of appeal to the æsthetic sentiment of a single people (as for instance, the English) has been entirely changed in a few centuries of development.

What we call beauty in poetry, therefore, is due to a marriage of the interest of thought to a certain relative interest of form that is almost entirely dependent on the conditions under which a particular language develops itself. And the relation

is, so to speak, a monogamous attachment between a language and one of the daughters of beauty for whom that particular language forms a peculiar attachment. So much is this the case that even where two different languages make use of a similar form of poetic appeal, they each treat it in an entirely different way.

The verse interest of English poetry is thus quite different from the verse interest of German poetry, though the two are based upon the same absolute æsthetic judgment, that a series of regularly alternating stresses and relaxations of the attention given to successive impulses of the thought produces pleasure. When Schiller and Shakspere treat the same theme, the literary interests are much the same in each case, but the poetic interests are vastly different. Or when Shakspere writes a verse like

"All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!"

an adequate German translation of the thought into

"Heil dir, Macbeth, der du wirst König sein!"

will not carry with it the interest of the poetic form which Shakspere gave his English words, though both forms of expression are, as far as their associational content goes, practically the same, and the fundamental judgment on which

both rhythm-series are based is the same in each appeal to the æsthetic sentiment.

It is not the fundamental æsthetic judgment involved in it, but the peculiar application of this fundamental æsthetic judgment, that determines the character of poetry.

We do not, therefore, have to wait for a science of Æsthetics in general before we can construct a science of English poetry. Nor need we be constantly referring the effect of poetry to ultimate æsthetic judgments, and thus excuse ourselves for a lack of an understanding of our poetry on the ground that our subject touches on the unknowable. And a scientific method for the study of poetry in general need not begin with an attempt to explain the nature of ultimate notions of beauty; it will be quite sufficient for scientific purposes if such study begin with a frank admission of our inability to explain these things, and start rather from generally recognized limitations of fact which condition the art of poetry to make it different from other arts which appeal to the æsthetic sentiment.

A fundamental limitation of this sort we find in the fact that the appeal which poetry makes to the æsthetic sentiment is always associated with the verbal expression of coördinated ideas, a limitation which at once separates poetry from the

other fine arts. And being associated with formulated thought in this way, poetry's æsthetic appeal is limited to the definite forms of arrangement possible to such material as is normally present when an idea is formulated in terms of language. As an art, it is not free to range at will over a field limited only by natural areas of sense-perception. It is quite different, therefore, from sculpture and the plastic arts whose material is limited only by the limitations of the solid; or from painting and the graphic arts whose material is limited only by the natural limitations of representation in two dimensions; or from music whose material is limited only by the natural and physical limitations of musical sounds. And the æsthetic appeal of poetry being thus limited to formulated thought, its material has no aspects of colour or of dimension to please the eye, and under normal conditions, no musical variation of tone, pitch, and harmony to please the ear. It can only affect the æsthetic sentiment in terms of concepts, or in terms of some characteristic usually associated with the verbal expression of concepts.

But not only is the material of the appeal of poetry thus limited—the mode of appeal is limited. Once having exhausted the forms of arrangement possible to groups of verbal concepts and to those normal concomitants of expression by which verbal

concepts pass from mind to mind, the modes of poetic appeal are exhausted. Now the fundamental limitations of thought-expression are in their nature pitilessly exigent; the very first one is a limitation of time and space which conditions all the operations of thought-formulation. There is no language known to men which can express truth other than by successive limitations of an initial notion cast into successive relations of conditioning predications. If I think such a simple truth as "God is good," I really have in my mind a group of notions of God-ness, attributes of divinity gathered up from a large number of experiences and relations, but by no means either catholic or absolute, and a possible predication relation, "is good," which is likewise gathered up from another large number of attributes of good men and women as they have affected my experience. And I can only think these notions together in a certain time-succession, the one notion following the other. I can neither state this proposition to my own mind, nor convey it to yours in immediate and absolute terms. And this is the simplest form of a predication. The æsthetic appeal of poetry therefore being thus limited to the formulation of thought, there is available for it only such forms of arrangement as are successive in character; the mind cannot stop its thinking processes to go back

and perceive in the thought or in some attribute of the thought a complex æsthetic synthesis of parts.

And this is so in fact. *All the æsthetic arrangements which poetry has known and made use of are æsthetic arrangements of succession — practically some sort of appeal to an æsthetic sense of rhythm.*

This fundamental limitation, therefore, conditions both the material and the form of the poetic appeal. And it places on poetry more exigent limitations than any other art is subject to.

So much, then, for our first general limitation of poetry as a fine art.

But the history of poetry shows us an even straiter limitation than this. If we take classic Greek poetry, for instance, we shall find that the fundamental element of its appeal to the æsthetic sentiment always consists in some definite arrangement of a single concomitant characteristic of Greek speech material, viz., the time-duration of those impulses of thought which we call syllables; we shall look in vain in Greek poetry for an æsthetic appeal based upon variations of intensity of syllables, though we know that such an intensity-variation was also a concomitant of Greek speech material. On the other hand, if we examine modern German poetry, we shall always find in it definite sequences of variation in the intensity with which the various syllables

impinge themselves on our attention; and here we shall look in vain for a formal æsthetic arrangement of syllables in respect to varying time-duration. Again, if we turn to Old English poetry, we shall find a complex system of variation in respect to both these elements, but yet a system of variation which neither Greek nor German would normally respond to as a formal appeal to his æsthetic sentiment. Such facts as these have always been puzzling to the historian of literature, who is forever attempting to construe literature into general terms derived from his individual experience.

The explanation of this apparent confusion lies in the fact that poetry is not only confined within the general limitation already stated, but is also subject to a special limitation due to its association with particular bodies of speech material. And when the poet comes to impose his form upon his materials, he is not free to choose any beautiful form appropriate to language in general, but has to work within the narrow limits of a particular form of æsthetic appeal determined for him by the development of the language he uses.

Each language in the course of its development thus singles out certain speech elements for its æsthetic material, and no poet or group of poets can interfere with this selection, or reject the selected

material for other of his own choosing. The VF for any particular language is therefore a constant, absolutely and definitely determinable. And the æsthetic sentiment which responds to appeals couched in terms of this vehicle, is the result of development and not subject to violent interference.

Take such a simple illustration as we have in our own language. Here the selected poetic material is the variation of the intensities with which the various parts of an idea impinge themselves on the mind's attention. This selection is the result of a development which may be traced all the way back to primitive Germanic speech conditions. And the creation of an æsthetic sentiment to respond to the selected poetic material is a normal result of this long speech development. There are also in our Modern English speech, quantitative distinctions which have an equally long history; but these quantitative distinctions have not been selected for poetic material, and the æsthetic sentiment is blind and deaf to appeals based on inherently beautiful arrangements of these quantitative elements. Your English poet, therefore, cannot arrange syllabic impulses in pleasing forms of variation in respect to their duration, and expect that English minds will respond to such an æsthetic appeal. The folly of such a course is illus-

trated by the history of the so-called " hexameter verse " in English.

We have, then, as our second limitation, this :—

The æsthetic material which determines the verse form of any body of poetry is selected by the language in which the poetry is written; and the æsthetic appeal of its poetry must be made within these special language limitations.

But there is a third limitation for poetry. The imposition of verse form cannot disturb the normal and natural form of expression grammatically fitting to the idea on which it is imposed. The thought of poetry in every language must be formulated in all the clearness and strength of native idiom. There are some few variations peculiar to poetic forms of expression, but these can be counted on one's fingers. And they are not in the first place peculiarly poetic idioms, but only normal forms of expression which have been crystallized by poetry and become models for subsequent imitation. They are always obsolete idioms that were at one time living and integral forms of all expression, whether poetic or not. We may say, therefore, that this limitation holds without exception. For instance, in our own English speech the relative positions of words are normally part of their idea-conveying power, and alterations of these normal positions befog and

becloud the idea. These last words we have written, when in such an arrangement as "Alterations of these conditions normal the idea befog and becloud," are absurd alike in English poetry and in English prose, with an absurdity which no punctuation marks will alleviate.[1]

This limitation has for English poetry still another application which we may glance at here. The stress relations of its various parts are also an integral part of an English idea; and it is not possible for the poet to disturb these in order to obtain pleasing arrangements. The least alteration of their normal incidence involves an alteration of the idea itself, and the change is immediately palpable. For instance, a monosyllabic adjective followed by a noun is normally a description in English thought, *e.g.* "least alteration" in the preceding sentence, and the adjective member of the group receives a stress only slightly less than that of the noun member. If I remove this stress from "least," the notion immediately becomes unintelligible. Again, certain parts of speech in English have come to have fixed stress relations to the context. One of these, for instance, is the definite article, which has no stress whatever in normal English thinking. If I should think *the*

[1] A failure to recognize this aspect of our limitation was the significant weakness of English eighteenth-century poetry.

with a stress upon it in the-least-alteration notion, I should so impair its identity that it would be difficult to recognize. And these are only two of countless similar facts of stress significance in English speech. If the poet violates these normal stress relations for the sake of his rhythm, his verse makes him say what he does not mean to say, and the fact that he is not a master of his craft becomes apparent.[1]

Such limitations of grammar — for these things are as much a part of grammar as are inflections — are found in every language. Poetry sometimes permissively, and even effectively, transcends them, but only at the rarest intervals; it does not ignore them. Just as soon as it becomes apparent that violations of idiom are being resorted to by the poet in order that he may not violate the fundamental conditions of his verse form, the interest of his poetry vanishes, and the poet's work becomes mechanical.

The limitation that *the imposition of the verse form must in no way interfere with the clear formulation of the thought in a simple and effective idiom* is, therefore, another cardinal limitation for poetry.

But besides these three limitations which rather concern the poetic form of the idea, there

[1] The failure to appreciate this aspect of our limitation has been the pitfall of much of our recent verse.

are two others which concern its subject-matter. One of these we have already noticed, viz., *that which fixes poetry within the limits of literature.* This limitation makes it necessary for poetry to possess Human Interest. To establish this limitation, — the limitation which separates poetry from mere pleasing verse, — we need only point to the fact that poetry is included in the term Literature. If we took the illustration which we made use of in the preceding chapter, and merely added to the idea as it stood in its first form of expression the verse form which we discovered in the last stage, we should not get poetry, but only a versified statement of fact. This, of course, constitutes a fundamental limitation. To discover how vital it is one need only turn through the pages of Wordsworth, whose theory of poetry did not take it into account. Fortunately, however, Wordsworth's theory and his practice were not always good bed-fellows.

The other limitation of subject-matter is rather comparative than absolute. If we study the history of poetry, we shall see that *the best poetry always contains this Human Interest in what we may call the superlative degree.* Its very earliest beginnings show a close association with the highest form of literary interest, the interpretative; its subsequent history shows that

in most instances where poetry has been selected as literature of permanent value, a high order of interpretative interest has been contained in it. Poetry begins in religion, and the best poetry of every race that has lived in the world shows poetry and religion hand in hand. All great poems have in them some attempt, adequate or inadequate, to explain the relation of man to the powers which he thinks of as being above him and beyond his ken — *The Psalms*, *The Iliad*, *The Æneid*, *The Inferno and Paradiso*, *Hamlet*, *Paradise Lost*, *In Memoriam*, *Paracelsus*, *The Ring and the Book* — they all have it in some form or other.

These are the fundamental limitations which condition the art of poetry. And they are more strict and more numerous than those of any other fine art. Small wonder is it, then, that poetry is the rarest of arts; and if it be true that the great artist reveals himself only in limitations, the poet is the greatest of all artists.

But apart from the concern they may give the poet, these limitations give us the material for scientific definition of our phenomena. And we may say in conclusion: *Poetry is literature, usually of a high degree of Human Interest, which, in addition to its Human Interest has in it an added Æsthetic Interest due to the arrangement of some*

easily recognizable and constantly present concomitant of thought-formulation into a form of æsthetic appeal for which an appreciative Æsthetic Sentiment has been gradually developed in the minds of those who habitually think by means of the language in which the poetry is written.

CHAPTER IV

FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF VERSE FORM

In the last chapter we reached by successive limitations a definition of poetry, which, though in a somewhat clumsy and non-literary fashion, nevertheless succinctly grouped together the significant characteristics of poetry in general. This definition is merely an interpretation in general terms of the facts we discovered in our preliminary experiment. The significant and peculiar element of poetry in the definition, as in our experiment, is the Verse Form Interest as conditioned by our limitations. We have already roughly determined the general limitations of this Verse Form Interest in order to reach an adequate theory of poetry; let us now examine some of the various forms under which it appears in the history of poetry. In other words, let us consider the various aspects of this formal element of poetry under different conditions of thought environment.

We have been thinking of Verse Form Interest as due to an arrangement of some external feature of language; and it may therefore have seemed

that we made our definition unnecessarily general. So it would be, had we to consider only those aspects of poetry which appeal to our own English minds as most strikingly differentiating poetry from prose. But we shall find that this Verse Interest has appeared in the history of poetry in a form whose most striking elements are not such external characteristics of words as quantity and stress, and that even in our English poetry are to be found undoubtedly poetic elements not resolvable into terms of time and intensity.

In thinking of these formal elements of poetry, therefore, we shall have to enlarge our notions of Verse Interest so as to take in all possible aspects of poetic form.

We have already pointed out the fact that poetry is an appeal to the æsthetic sentiment; and we have defined the various limitations which condition this appeal to the æsthetic sentiment. We have seen that these limitations exclude appeals to the eye, and permit appeals to the ear only within definite and fixed limitations, the limitations excluding, for instance, appeals to the musical sense. We are thus shut up to the various arrangements possible to the normal concomitants of thought-formulation. We have thus two questions before us: what are these concomitants, and how may they be arranged?

The most obvious concomitant of thought-formulation is words, and it might seem, therefore, that the æsthetic appeal of poetry was limited to æsthetic arrangements of the sound-elements of words. But there is also a concomitant of thought-formulation which, while not so obvious as these sound-groups representing notions, is yet nevertheless a vital element of the formulated idea.

Every idea is made up of a group of parts standing to one another in some definite relation. The simplest and commonest form of such relation is that of predication expressible in terms of A is B; *i.e.* a subject of the thought "A," and "is B" a predication concerning this subject. Both subject and predicate may be limited, defined, or qualified in a multitude of forms and relations, or may be grouped with other predications in certain definite relations to them. Suppose we take such a simple idea as

"The universe makes known the greatness of its creator."

We have here a general idea which may be expressed in the general terms of a subject and predication, A is B.

"A" is the universe thought of as a group of stupendous cosmic phenomena.

"is-B" is a thing making known the attributes of God thought of as extensions — "magnifications" as it were — of human attributes like power and knowledge.

"A" denoting the universe when thought of as a group of cosmic phenomena which to the human mind appear stupendous, includes such notions as "the sun," "the moon and stars," "the course of the seasons," "the succession of day and night." It excludes those phenomena of infinitesimal adjustment and adaptation which appear even more marvellous to our modern minds than do these cosmic operations, as we see from the predication term, for notions of minuteness are not-B. We might call the universe in the aspect under which we look at it in this proposition the "magnificent universe," did we use the word "magnificent" in its original connotation.

Logically speaking, "A," as we have it before us, is not a connotative but a denotative term, grouping all these attributes of splendour and magnificence together as a single unit, a single thing, which for the time being we call "A." Similarly "is B" represents a predication of making known, declaring, showing, revealing a number of aspects of the divine creator in terms of greatness of soul, power, knowledge, pervasiveness, etc., which is brought before our minds as a single action. "A is B," when we think of it in this way, is thus a simple, single definite predication; we cannot change "A" without getting into the "not-A" category, and we cannot change

"B" without getting into the "not-B" category. It would seem, therefore, that we have here certain elements of thought-formulation which cannot be varied; and that our material in this its logical aspect is not poetic material at all because it is not susceptible of any arrangement, let alone an æsthetic one.

And this would be quite true if "A is B" could be expressed in what we might call "perfect" language, that is, a language made up of denotative terms. But there is no such language. We have already pointed out that a denotative language is not possible to human experience; and the nearest we can come to a perfectly scientific means of expressing ideas is only a rough approximation to such a denotative language. Thought, to us, is always in terms of human experience, and it is only the mind of God that can think untrammelled by these limitations. Our common language is thus made up of connotative terms, and we do not say "A is B," but "this aspect of A is this aspect of B, and that aspect of A is that aspect of B, and the other aspects of A are the other aspects of B." So, practically speaking, "A is B" is indefinitely variable when stated in our common speech.

We have, therefore, in such an idea as that the most general aspects of which we try to represent

the words, "The universe shows the greatness God," a thought-formulation whose terms are pable of a wide range of variation in respect to nguage connotations without the serious impair-ent, as far as our human thinking goes, of the ea itself. Let us turn to such a series of varia-ons as we have them in the Nineteenth Psalm. use Professor Cheyne's translation because it so early recognizes and so aptly renders into Eng-h the formal variation of the ideation as an tegral element of Hebrew poetry.)

> "The heavens recount the glory of God
> and the firmament declares his handiwork.
> Day unto day is a well-spring of speech,
> and night unto night shews forth knowledge;
> Their voice has gone out through the whole earth,
> and their words unto the end of the world."

ere we have as "A"

Cosmic phenomena as they strike the human mind in rms of proportionate greatness, etc.

nd as "is B"

The making known and interpreting aspects of the eator's soul (the very term is an illogical limitation of e nature of an infinite God) in terms of human know-dge, power, etc.

he first aspect of "A" which the poet presents the splendour of the heavens: this aspect, which

we may represent by A_1, appears under two forms of connotation, viz.: —

A_1', the heaven, *coelum*, the hollow vault of the sky.

A_1'', the expanse of the heavens, the "firmament"; Hebr. *rakia*.

"is B_1" likewise has two forms of connotation, viz.: —

B_1', the revealing of the splendour of God as one would tell a glorious story.

B_1'', the declaration of the power of God as one would explain an intricate piece of craftsmanship.

Our first stave, then, is

A_1' is B_1'.
A_1'' is B_1''.

The second stave calls attention to the greatness of the universe as shown in the succession of times. In this "A" is the succession of day and night, "A_2" let us call it, and "is B" is the utterance of a sort of cosmic speech glorifying the creator, "B_2" let us call it. This formulation of the original idea is likewise under a double aspect, "A_2" being first thought of as the succession of days, "A_2'," and then as the succession of nights, "A_2''"; and "is B_2" as being a well-spring of words (vocabulary) connoting God's great attributes, "B_2'," and the showing forth in language the truth of God's greatness, "B_2''."

So we have as our second stave: —

A_2' is B_2'.
A_2'' is B_2''.

In the third, the universe is conceived of as time successions that are vocal, endowed with powers of human utterance, "A_3"; and all-pervasiveness is predicated of these vocal powers, "is B_3." Here, again, the chief connotation is figured under two aspects of sub-connotations: —

A_3' is B_3'.
A_3'' is B_3''.

This arrangement, you will say, is evident without further explanation; but is it æsthetic? you will ask. Such a question we do not have to answer categorically; all that we need to show is that the arrangement is potentially æsthetic, if we would bring a verse form of this sort under our criteria and limitations for poetry.

And to show this needs little argument. For the arrangement is obviously one which an æsthetic sentiment, through mere habit, could easily be trained to respond to. You yourself, once made aware of it in Hebrew poetry, will read translations of Hebrew poetry which roughly represent it, with a feeling of pleasure which you do not have when you read translated Hebrew prose.

But it is really a rhythmic appeal. What actu-

ally takes place is this: A thought is first presented to the mind in terms of cognition with certain emotional associations; this thought is then re-presented to the mind in identical terms of cognition, but with the attendant emotional associations slightly varied. In our first stave the idea, as we have said, is "The-heaven-above is a-revelation-of-the-glorious-power-of-God." It is stated twice. The first time it is received by the mind as a new and original formulation, and consequently the mind's attention is fixed on it with a more or less tense effort, what we call a stress-of-attention; it is the same sort of an effort as that which I make when I lift my hand. But the second time the thought is stated, its cognitive elements are already in the mind, and no effort is necessary to grasp them; the attention is therefore relaxed, as if I had let my hand fall. And so all the way through the series there is stress and relaxation, stress and relaxation, in a regular systole and diastole of this attentional effort as related to the cognitions. But the intervals — that is, the times between two successive impulses of attention as directed to the cognitive elements of the idea — are filled up by slightly varied associations, not interfering with the cognitive elements of the thought, but rather supporting and sustaining them, so that the mental effort or activity does not altogether cease; it

is, as it were, passively suspended. To prove that this is the case, it is only necessary to read aloud thought arranged in this fashion. For a relaxation of attention produces in our English speech a careless form of utterance through which successive parts of an idea are not sharply differentiated from one another in terms of tenseness of vocal chords. If you read aloud, therefore: —

> "*He brought me up also out of the pit of destruction,*
> out-of-the-miry-swamp,
> *And set my feet on a rock,*
> made-firm-my-stepping [1]

you will inevitably hasten the hyphenated phrases, translating the weakening of the attention into terms of laxness of the vocal chords. You will also probably give less attention to "And set my feet upon a rock" than to the original "He brought me up, etc.," because the primary cognition, "rescuing by uplift," is already in your mind. If we denote this secondary stress of attention by "

[1] It should be noted here that it is quite impossible to render connotations of one language into equivalent connotations of another, for it is just in respect to connotations that languages separate themselves from one another. So an English translation necessarily introduces elements of fresh cognition in trying to render these connotations. But there is enough residuum in such translations of Hebrew poetry as these excellent ones of Canon Cheyne's to enable us to recognize the presence of the form-variation we are speaking of.

and the still lower grade which we give to "out-of-the-miry-swamp" by ×, we can represent the rhythm of this passage of poetry by ′ × ″ ×. Such an alternating systole and diastole is really a rhythm of the mental faculties as sharp and distinct as those muscular rhythms which one may illustrate in moving the hands or the feet.

In the Psalm we have analyzed the rhythm is clear, symmetrical, and absolutely regular. But we need not have it so in order to establish this rhythm movement of the mental faculties; there are infinite æsthetic possibilities of variation and grouping such as those we have cited, which we cannot go into here, as our concern is not primarily with Hebrew poetry.

The point to be borne in mind is this: *The material of a poetic appeal to the æsthetic sentiment may lie in a structural arrangement of the various parts of a thought-formulation; and æsthetically effective verse forms may be constructed out of this material.*

Practically, what we have in Hebrew poetry is a rhythm of the fundamental elements of predication, either of the terms themselves, or of some special limitation of the terms, by the repetition of one or more of these elements with a slight alteration of the connotations associated with them when they are put into language.

Back of this arrangement there lies a still more elemental one, from which this may, conceivably, have developed. And this elemental arrangement is of peculiar importance to us English, because it is found in our own poetry. Indeed, it is the common factor, so to speak, of all Indogermanic poetry; but it is the one factor which is persistently overlooked in studies of Verse Form.

If we consider the elements of predication, as they are practically expressible in terms of words, we see that they are subject to a fundamental physical limitation. The mind, under ordinary conditions, cannot receive a concept as a single thought-impulse; indeed, cannot formulate one absolutely with one single operation of the intelligence; its operations are conditioned by the fundamental limitations of time and space that condition all matter. This makes it necessary for all its operations to be successive. A concept, therefore, under ordinary conditions, is a sort of procession of thought-impulses from one point to another; when the mind has traversed the path $a+b+c+d$, etc., it gathers up the several impulses and gains the concept. There are two ways of gaining a concept, though they are in their nature one and the same: the one process is by swelling an inadequate concept to a required fulness by added connotations; the other is by restricting

too wide a concept by successive limitations. In the passage of translated Hebrew poetry which we chose for our illustration, the former process was illustrated, *i.e.* denotation by connotative groups, but in such a thought as that which follows we have denotation by a succession of limitations: —

"For he [*i.e.* the righteous man] is like a tree planted by the watercourses
that brings forth its fruit in due season
and whose leaf withers not."

A (already defined by a series of limitations)
is B (tree) + Lim. (planted by watercourse)
and is B + Lim′. (that brings, etc.)
and is B + Lim″. (whose leaf, etc.)

The tree in the poet's mind is a tree that has been planted by the hand of man beside a watercourse made for irrigation purposes, and that brings forth its fruit under normal conditions of life and growth, and that with its fresh foliage presents evidence to the eye of its fortunate situation and of the beneficence of its planter.

Both these forms of denotation are progressive; the mind grasps the various aspects in successions — successions of time. Let us call these aspects the "moments of the thought." In grammar we call them "phrases"; but it is important here altogether to dissociate them from words and to think of them as groups of notions. The word

"moment," originally "movement," with a suggestion from its usage in physics, where it is a sort of "measure of progress," will adequately represent these impulses of thought-force, so to speak.

Now these steps in ideation, as the thought marches through the mind, could easily be grouped in definite proportions so that the attention would gather them up by impulses of concentration and relaxation. If they were all of them approximately of the same size in terms of notions, the result would be a regular systole and diastole of the cognitive faculties. One would have $a + b + c$ = cognition, $e + f + g$ = cognition, $b + i + j$ = cognition, etc. Such an arrangement would definitely distinguish a thought-formulation where it was present from one where it was absent. In the one we should have a series of turnings and returnings, really "verses," as we shall point out; in the other the straightforward forth-right utterance of mere prose.

Such an absolute equality, or even a proportionate grouping of thought-moments would be a rhythmic Verse Form. The limitations of language make it almost impossible to impose such an equality of moments on a given thought without violating the integrity of the thought itself, and getting us outside our third limitation of poetry by violently altering the natural and

normal expression of the idea. But an approximate equality of thought-moments is possible by the addition to the thought of some external mark of punctuation, so to speak, which the mind will look for and obey. In our Hebrew poetry we have already seen how the pointing off by likenesses of connotation accomplishes this purpose, hastening or retarding the grouping processes of the mind. We have another excellent illustration of this in chant music. Under ordinary conditions the fitting of musical phrase to language is confined to poetic forms of language, where the moments of the thought are regularly grouped and lend themselves easily to corresponding groups of musical moments. But when prose is linked with musical phrasing as in the chant, the thought-moments are artificially proportioned to the musical phrase by arbitrary and abnormal divisions. In such adaptations the musical phrasing is the means of punctuating the thought into æsthetic groupings.

If we turn to our Old English poetry, we shall find still a different punctuating system to make æsthetic groupings of thought-moments, viz., a system of stresses — usually word stresses — grouped in 1 + 1 = 1 + 1 order, and helped out by alliteration. In other words, a thought-moment is made to coincide with every sum of

two stressed syllables, and every pair of thought-moments is collocated by a mark or brand common to both in that they "alliterate" with each other; *e.g.* Beowulf 1252–1256.

"Sigon þā tō slæpe, Sum sāre angeald
æfen ræste, swā him ful oft gelamp,
siððan gold sele, Grendel warode,
unriht æfnde, oð þæt ende becwōm,
swylt æfter synnum."

"They settled to sleep, One bitterly paid for
His evening rest, As often had happened to them,
Since their gilded hall, Grendel had beset
His wickedness working, Until his end came,
Death for his sin."

Here the thought moves in certain well-defined moments of more or less equal length even in my rough Modern English version of it. It is accompanied by certain outward marks which determine the moments: these are a definite form of alliteration; certain definite forms of stress rhythm-structure; and a certain narrow range of quantitative or metrical features; (rhyme is also occasionally found in Old English poetry). And all these accompaniments are closely adapted to the arrangement of the thought-moments themselves — so closely that they seem to be inseparable from it.

It would be natural to think of these outward

marks as original, and of the thought-structure as accidental, growing out of the attempt to observe them, just as we think of modern rhyme in rhymed verse as its original feature, and imagine the poet as producing verses by filling up the intervening spaces between the rhymes. But it is far more likely that these definite arrangements of external features were first developed as means of punctuating the inherent poetic structure of the idea and making the perception of its æsthetic arrangement easy and inevitable. Indeed the distinction between the better and more perfect Old English poems and the weaker and inferior ones, is just in the subordination of these external marks to the thought itself.

We have already seen that an arrangement of an A-is-B, Like-A-is-Like-B character really contains a rhythmic appeal to the mind's attention. In like manner this Old English form of arrangement of thought-moments produces a rhythmic movement of the mind's attention; for there is always a more or less considerable pause between the end of one moment and the beginning of another, the mind requiring a little time to grasp one group of ideas before going on with another;[1]

[1] Our modern reading undoubtedly obscures somewhat the original structure, because we import into it our Modern English wide stress intervals. These wide intervals did not exist in

so that the progress of the attention is through percept and collocation, percept and collocation, percept and collocation, — a progress essentially rhythmic.

In this poetry, then, as in Semitic poetry, we have an æsthetic arrangement of thought-moments; but here we have them punctuated by external collocations of accents or stresses instead of having them marked off by likenesses of connotation. Fundamentally the appeal is the same in each case.

Now we might go on to point out this same element in classic poetry — this grouping of thought-moments — and show how here the means of punctuation is different, a certain sum of certain units of syllable-time; and how here the

Old English speech; indeed many of the commonest of them are not older than Shakspere. For instance, *sigon þā tō slæpe* is to the modern scholar *siggun þā tō slæpu*, with a wide stress interval between the first and last syllables of *si-gon* and *slæ-pe*. But in Old English the interval was not nearly so great, else the *o*-character of the *-gon*-syllable and the *e*-character of the *e*-syllable would have been blurred; in like manner *þā* and *tō* would have suffered a shortening. When we restore the Old English even gliding movement from syllable to syllable, the thought-moment structure becomes much clearer, for the staccato successions of a row of unstressed syllables, as in *swā him ful oft gelamp*, which are so offensive to a Modern English rhythm sense, quite disappear, and the integrity of the thought-moment is not broken up by violent stress alternations.

means of punctuation has in itself an æsthetic form so strikingly developed as to obscure its original purpose and make the student think more of the "measurer" or metre than of the thing measured. We might show, too, how when the means of measuring classic poetry in this way was no longer at hand on account of the obscuring of the quantitative values of syllables in vernacular Latin, a new yard-stick gradually came into use, viz., a standard of stressed syllable successions such as we found in Old English; and how this standard developed into regularity and uniformity.

But our purpose is not a history of poetic form — not even a history of English poetic form. We are only endeavouring to get before our minds a new conception of verse form so that we may be better prepared for the study of our own verse forms.

Yet perhaps it is worth while to notice here that the presence of this thought-moment verse form in all the earliest forms of Indogermanic poetry we can reach, and its presence in Germanic poetry before Germanic poets began to yield to foreign literary influences, points to this arrangement of the moments of thought in forms of rhythm as the original condition of Indogermanic poetry; and that these turnings back, *versus*, of the mind in regular efforts of collocation of con-

notations or limitations were the original distinctions of poetically formulated thought from the straightforward, straight-away, *prorsus*, formulations of mere prose; and that the varied concomitants of this verse form, such as quantity of syllables, stress of syllables, alliteration, rhyme, etc., and all the things we now consider to be the essentials of versification, were originally external arrangements to make the inherent rhythm of the thought palpable to the mind — added adornment, as it were, to an æsthetically proportioned structure.

If we bear these things in mind when we come to the study of English poetry, we shall be better able to appreciate the fact that the æsthetic arrangement of the thought-moments is as vital an element of it as are the æsthetic arrangements of stressed and unstressed syllables which mark these moments off for us.

CHAPTER V

PUNCTUATING ELEMENTS OF VERSE FORM

In the last chapter we found that the common element of all poetry, ancient and modern, which distinguished it from prose forms of expression, was a certain æsthetic grouping of what we called the "moments" of the thought-formulation. The differentiations on which this æsthetic appeal was based were qualitative as in Hebrew poetry, or quantitative as in English poetry; that is, the connotations and limitations of the thought might be varied in terms of quality of ideation as in ancient Semitic poetry, various degrees of likeness producing variously stressed rhythm-impulses; or in terms of the quantity of notion, so to speak, involved in the ideation, more or less equal moments of thought producing more or less regular time successions.

Though this element of æsthetic arrangement of thought-moments is common to all poetry, the modes of calling the mind's attention to the arrangement are various. Alliteration is certainly present in Semitic poetry as one of these modes;

certain quantitative accompaniments are also discernible in Hebrew poetry. Alliteration and definite accentual syllable measure is the mode for Primitive Germanic poetry. A quantitative syllable measure in proportion of $1 : \frac{1}{2}$ is the mode for classic poetry. A regular rhythmic differentiation of stresses in terms of high and low is the mode of modern European poetry.

In the history of various bodies of poetry these various modes of accompaniment develop in great variety of æsthetic form. And the developed forms are so strikingly æsthetic themselves that the thought-moment structure becomes a sort of inherent poetic element which we pay little attention to, thinking of it as a sort of "accident" of the versification, and ascribing its æsthetic qualities to peculiar powers of the poet. In the eyes of the student the arrangement of thought-moments is due to "an artistic placing of the cæsura" or a "skilful use of the end pause"; it is the "metre" or the "rhythm" of the verse which he devotes his main attention to. Such a result is natural, and perhaps for the present we shall do well to accept it, and ascribe certain phenomena, like those observable in Whitman's poetry, where the æsthetic structure of the thought ignores the punctuation of the regular rhythm-series which our æsthetic sentiments are

used to, as due to the waywardness of the poetic genius.

Let us glance at some of these punctuating systems. If our poetic experience were *nil* and our minds mere *tabulæ rasæ* as far as æsthetic appreciation of poetry went, we might conceive of three possible means of externally punctuating off an inherently poetic thought-structure. Starting with the unit impulse of thought, a syllable (not a letter) either alone or in composition, we should have as its physical concomitants: *articulation-character of the impulse* as determined by the vocal organs employed in making it, *time of impulse* as determined by its duration, and *intensity of impulse* as determined by the attention given it. These elements are in constant association with thought-formulation as elements determining the identity of notions. We could not go far outside this circle without getting our poetry outside our first limitation. We could not, for instance, make use of a colour association with various impulses, conceiving a syllable which had *a* in it as white, and one that had *i* as black, however natural such associations might be, because they are not elements of thought-formulation at all. Nor could we make use of musical tones, because they are not elements of thought-formulation. In short, by the very first limitation of poetry we are shut

up to some element of language which is constant, and which is associated with the identity of word forms and groups of word forms.

Let us take up these punctuating elements in the order named.

Alliteration is the only arrangement of impulses according to their articulation-character that has been largely used as a punctuating element. In its modern application it is a mere adornment of poetic form, and our minds recognize only one variety of it, viz., consonant alliteration. But in earlier systems of versification it was evidently a punctuating element, and in using it the initial impulse of one stressed syllable was considered like that of another stressed syllable, not only when both began with the same consonant sound, but also when they both began with vowels, a likeness which the modern mind passes over without especial notice. Just what its province was in early bodies of poetry is not clearly made out. As it appears in Old English poetry, it points the mind to the pairs of stressed syllables which measure off the thought-moments, and in Middle English alliterative poetry, as it is called, it performs the same function, though apparently it is used more carelessly; *e.g.* in the second of the verses from Beowulf, p. 89,

"ǣfen ræste, swā him ful oft gelamp"

it unites the first stressed impulse, *æf-*, of the first half-verse with the first stressed impulse *oft*, of the second half-verse and thus brings the two thought-moments together as an organic unity. Similarly in its Middle English form, as in

"In a somer sesoun, whan softe was the sonne,"

it yokes together the two thought-moments as a single verse. These are the best illustrations of its function as a punctuating element in connection with stress.

So long as verse form does not contain a regular numerical measure of the syllabic impulses of the thought-formulation, some additional punctuating mark like this is necessary. For there is danger that the mind may pick out the wrong impulse of a group of single impulses on which to place sentence stress; *e.g.* in our selection *him* might have been conceivably an important word of its context and received a stress and the thought a meaning which the author did not intend. When, however, English verse became regular in respect to its impulses, and a regularly recurring succession of stressed and unstressed syllables unmistakably marked off its succeeding moments, alliteration disappeared as a formal element of its structure. There was no longer any use for it as a punctuating element; the thought-moments were

sharply and inevitably punctuated by the rhythm-groups of stressed and unstressed syllables. Alliteration became, therefore, mere added ornament, and was no longer a vital element of the verse form.

Precisely the same thing happened in the history of Latin poetry, which in its original state was more or less dependent on alliterative elements. But when the Roman mind became sharply conscious of the quantitative proportions of syllables, and began to use regularly recurring groups of them as a punctuating element, alliteration disappeared as a vital characteristic of Latin verse form, and became a mere means of adornment.

There is another form of this punctuation by syllabic likeness which furnishes a means of grouping thought-moments, namely, rhyme. Accurately speaking, rhyme is the recurrence of stressed syllables whose last elements are identical (or similar, if we include assonance as a kind of rhyme). As an element of verse punctuation it is practically available only to link the ends of thought-moments, and then only in a regular rhythm-series of stressed syllables. As a means of linking together moments of thought already rhythmically proportioned by some other punctuating method, its effectiveness was discerned in Old English poetry. And in all stanza poetry in which several verses are grouped together in a

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symmetrical whole, rhyme is almost a necessity. This is especially true of lyric forms of poetry, whose moments must be adapted to corresponding moments of musical grouping; in such poetry the point where the verse turns must be unmistakable, else there is great danger of the rhythm of the poetry and the rhythm of the music parting company. A musical phrase is sharp and definite, being not only a group of rhythm-units, but also a group of time-units; and the musical phrasing is the controlling partner, so to speak. The fundamental character of lyric poetry, therefore, is sharp distinction of rhythm-waves, and sharp definition of thought-moments. Take for example the exquisite lyric of Ben Jonson's: —

> "Drink to me only with thine eyes
> And I will pledge with mine;
> Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
> And I'll not look for wine.
> The thirst that from the soul doth rise
> Doth ask a drink divine:
> But might I of Jove's nectar sup
> I would not change for thine."

Here there are only three rhythm-waves, "Drink to," "might I," and "Jove's nec-," that do not traverse the entire distance between an English stressed impulse and an unstressed one, and the preponderance of the sharp waves in the other

verses will sharpen up even these; the moments are equally sharp and definite, with no suspensive pauses at the ends of the verses, and no glidings-over from one verse to another. This is a typical lyric structure purposely adapted to musical phrasing, and in it rhyme plays the important rôle of marking off for the ear the coincidences of the thought-moments with the phrases of the musical accompaniment. But rhyme plays still another rôle in English verse: it marks off for the ear a general æsthetic structure of verses into some typical grouping for which the mind has a predilection; in other words it forms verses into stanzas. If we take for example Shakspere's cxxxii[nd] sonnet we see rhyme performing this function: —

"Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
Have put on black and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face:
O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack."

"Thine eyes I love," "Have put on black," "The grey cheeks of the east," "that full star," "Doth half that glory," etc., present rhythm-waves whose length is irregular, and whose height-variation is sometimes scarcely perceptible. The verse pauses in "the sun of heaven Better becomes" and "as well beseem thy heart To mourn for me" are so slight that the thought-moments glide into one another with scarce a perceptible interval. This rhythm is evidently ill adapted to musical accompaniment, and the rhyme in it now serves an entirely different purpose; viz., that of grouping the verses into an æsthetic whole whose various parts would be difficult to perceive were they not sharply punctuated by some external element.

The chief function of rhyme has always been to sharpen the punctuation of thought-moments; its use to determine thought-moments is entirely secondary. Our strongest and best poetry in English is unrhymed because it is just this blending of verse with verse that gives variety and fluency to English poetry. One need only compare some of Pope's poetry with Wordsworth's to appreciate this element, lacking in the one, and abundant in the other.

The history of the use of rhyme in English is most interesting, and perhaps worthy of a very brief summary here. It appears frequently in

Old English alliterative poetry as an additional ornament, but only sporadically as a determining element of the thought-moments. When the Old English verse form broke up into the Middle English system of alliterative verse, it became slightly more prominent. Layamon uses rhyme with great frequency in the *Brut*, but by his fitful employment of it furnishes evidence that its value as a determining element of alliterative verse structure was only vaguely apprehended. With the introduction of the Continental forms of regularly recurring rhythm-waves, rhyme begins to play an important part, not only to determine a strophic or stanzaic verse structure but also to punctuate a couplet structure. In its latter usage it is an important element in the finest verse form that Middle English literature developed, the rhymed five-wave rhythm of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. But the limitations it imposed were too great for Chaucer's contemporaries, and in their work the sacrifice of Human Interest to its æsthetic interest is little short of painful. In the poetry after Chaucer's time, the breaking up of the English inflectional system, through which dissyllabic words of the form ′ × became monosyllabic, made its punctuating force too prominent.

But the abandonment of rhyme in continuous

non-lyric verse was not accomplished until Marlowe, Shakspere, and Milton demonstrated by their efficient use of it the power of the so-called "blank" verse form. Side by side, however, with this abandonment of the rhyme-prop, as it might be called, in non-lyric verse forms, a rich development in rhyme took place in Elizabethan lyric forms. So that we have together in Elizabethan poetry the highest expression of unrhymed verse form and the finest development of the rhymed lyric form. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a reaction to rhymed types of verse, but at an enormous sacrifice of the natural fluency and beauty of English speech rhythms. The nineteenth century brought about a return to normal English conditions with the development of an æsthetic sentiment so sensitive to English speech rhythm as not only to dispense with rhyme in sustained poetry, but even to tolerate rhythmic irregularities in the pleasure of a varied rhythmic movement essentially and typically regular.

This, of course, is a mere outline of the development of the function of rhyme as a punctuating element in English poetry, but it shows clearly that rhyme is not an essential element of English verse form, though for centuries it was thought to be an essential element, and is still

apprehended as the most striking feature of English verse.

Of the other elements practically available for punctuating thought-moments in poetry, the two most commonly employed have been "quantity" and "accent," time and intensity.

We have already seen how "accent" or "intensity" was employed to punctuate Old English poetry, as a means of singling out one or two critical points in a moment to pair with one or two critical points in a succeeding moment and make an æsthetic grouping. We did not go into a detailed examination of the system because much of the detail is uncertain. The development of an æsthetic sentiment to respond to a verse form made up of regular recurrences, not only of stressed syllables but of unstressed syllables as well, was not really a violent introduction of a new verse form, but simply the adoption of a new method of using the old punctuating material. It is not for naught that Old English poetry from the seventh to the tenth century is the richest body of poetry in western Europe. And it is not true, though we are taught to think so, that all this æsthetic development ran out in the alliterative poetry of Middle English and faded away into popular ballad forms of poetry. It merely changed its channel; the melody of

Chaucer's verse did not get into English poetry in one generation.

If we could only appreciate at its full value the wonderful richness of English verse form, we might ask for an explanation of its richness. Such an inquiry would lead us all the way back to *Beowulf*. In other words, the development of English verse form has been continuous, and English poetry, like English speech, has enriched itself at the expense of its neighbours, not by downright thefts and appropriations of foreign material, but by absorption of such material into a great stream of native speech tendency, continuous and unchecked in its mighty flow through generation after generation.

We shall take up in later chapters the question of the character of English verse form material as we now have it after this long course of development, and the study of it will illustrate clearly a most complex and most interesting development of stress-differentiations in successive syllables as a means of punctuating thought-moments into æsthetic groupings.

Let us for a moment glance at the employment of quantitative or time-variations of successive syllables as a means of verse form punctuation. If we take a simple Roman thought like

"Hic mihi labor extremus, hæc meta viarum longarum"

and try to think it through our minds in what to a Roman was the natural and logical order of its parts, we shall have something like what follows: —

Hic ("this," *i.e.* loss of my father, thought of as subject of the predication to follow) — *mihi* (the person speaking so intimately affected by the predication to follow as to regard himself as its possessor) — *labor* (the notions of "toil" and "anxiety" together) — *extremus* (the last of a series, usually last of a cumulating series); or in English words: "This was my crowning sorrow" (the predicating copula is usually left unexpressed in Latin speech). Another aspect of the thought is added: *haec* ("this" as before, but to be conceived in a different association as yet undetermined but probably similar to the preceding "agony" notion) — *meta* (the loss of my father conceived in predicate relation as an end blindly striven for, like the "goal of a race-course," but not seen until the end is actually reached) — *viarum* ("journeyings," "travelled ways," "roads," conceived as closely associated with *meta* in the Latin object-genitive relation — "it ended my travels") — *longarum* (definition of length associated with *viarum*); or in English words, "This, alas, was the goal of my long wandering."

Associated with these notions as a sound-element

sharply determining their identity is a variation in their syllable-time in terms of 2 : 1, *i.e.* the syllables are either long or short (with a certain narrow range of variations).

"Hīc mĭ-hĭ lă-bŏr ēx-trē-mūs; hæc mē-tă vĭ-ā-rūm lōn-gā-rūm."

There is also attached to certain syllables of each group of syllables a certain stress of attention falling as marked by the accents above; but in classic Latin it is likely that the difference between a stressed and unstressed syllable was not so great as the difference between a syllable which received the rhythm-ictus and one which did not. At any rate, to a Roman ear, the striking characteristic of a syllable was its time-duration and not its intensity.

Still one point more: the normal succession of notions as they arose before a Roman's consciousness was roughly as we have endeavoured to represent it, viz. subject + its limitations + limitations of predicate + predication word itself, which was unexpressed if merely copula predication. But this normal order could be varied considerably without impairing the logical relation of the parts in any way.

Now suppose I leave out the *mihi* notion as being sufficiently prominent in the context without verbal expression here, and alter slightly the order

of succession in which these words fall, and arrange the thought-formulation as Vergil does:—

"Hīc lăbŏr ēxtrēmūs lōngārum[1] hæc mētă vīārūm."

A Roman mind would at once recognize a new element in the thought-expression which would interpret itself metrically to his ears as a succession of long and short impulses grouped according to an æsthetic type for which his mind had a special predilection. In other words, the thought would now make an added appeal to his æsthetic sentiment while appealing to his sympathy. The æsthetic appeal would be essentially the same as is made to our ears by the time succession of music written in 4/4 time, since those syllables I have marked _ would be exactly (no more and no less) twice the duration of those marked ∪. Conscious of this time-grouping, the thinker would give strong attention to the first impulse of every group of these four (the mind naturally treats the initial impulse of a bar of music in the same way); he would recognize a pause in the thought after *extremus* (cæsura) as well as after *viarum*. The æsthetic series would therefore be something like this:—



[1] Final *-um* in classic Latin was lost before a following word beginning with a vowel or with *h*.

We have here two moments the sum of the times of whose syllables makes exactly twelve long impulses, and these impulses are always distributed so that each succeeding long impulse is followed either by another long impulse or by two successive short ones, except for the last five impulses which are always in the order _ ∪ ∪ _ _. Such a punctuation system is capable of great variety, being in its flexibility very like that of our English blank verse.

But our English minds do not respond to its appeal. All our speech habits unfit us to appreciate it, and what we usually do when we read it is to turn it into a more or less regular succession of stressed and unstressed syllables that would be meaningless gibberish to a Roman. For there are two things that the English mind must be conscious of, if it is to get the full value of such an appeal. In the first place, the fact that the relation of the times of the short and long syllables is in the proportion of $\frac{1}{2} : 1$. Now this is not an easy task for a mind used to thinking in a language like ours, where the difference between a long and a short syllable is not in the proportion of $1 : \frac{1}{2}$, but varies constantly according to the speech habit of various persons. Take the word *long*, for instance: if one listens sharply with a time consciousness in his mind to the utterance

of this word as it falls from English lips, he will see that the vowel, and with the vowel the time utterance of the whole word, varies all the way from an open *o* which is really a short vowel, to an open *o* which is almost as long as a diphthong; and this variation in no way affects the identity of the word, indeed most users of English are not conscious of the variation at all. In the same way such a word as *father* will vary in the respective time of its two syllables all the way from 3 : 1 to 1½ : 1. Or, again, such a diphthong as that in *make*, *eⁱ*, will vary all the way from a sound that in respect to its time has scarcely any more duration than the *a* in *tack*, to one that has the duration of a long vowel plus a short one. We do have quantity in our speech, but it is of too shifting and uncertain a character for poetry to build on. Even the recognition of a succession of alternating long and short vowels is difficult in English, and the impression of quantity is so vague that almost any other association will interfere with it. For instance, in "short and sharp and quick" the vowel sounds in "short" and "sharp" are really long; but the notion of "sharpness" and "shortness" in the words themselves blots out the quantity of their vowel sounds almost entirely, so that as far as the time of their utterance goes, they are the equiva-

lent of "quick." And this without any impairment of the words' identity.

Any one can test this for himself by taking a line of Milton's verse and reciting it to the clicking of a metronome; such an experiment will show clearly that proportionate time equivalence between long and short vowels in English is a mere fiction of the imagination. Short vowels there are and long vowels and diphthongs there are in English speech, but the shortness and longness of English syllables is not a matter of absolute proportion intimately associated with the identity of English words. But there is ample evidence to show that an absolute and fixed proportion did exist in the classic languages. And the English student of the quantitative measures of Latin and Greek poetry, if he is to understand the appeal they make, must first of all accustom himself to the recognition of these absolute proportions of long and short syllables. It will not do for him to turn these time relations into corresponding terms of stress relations, though the result of such a translation makes a rhythm series to which his English æsthetic sentiment is not unresponsive. In so doing he is not reading classic poetry; he is merely creating for himself a sort of poetic appeal that is neither fish nor flesh (though it may be the red herring

which a Renaissance method of classical study teaches us to believe it to be).

These then are some of the punctuating systems which various languages have developed in the service of poetry. Even such a brief comparison of them as we have made in this chapter shows clearly the fundamental principle that the æsthetic appreciation of a given verse form, starting from a few fundamental æsthetic judgments, rapidly develops from them a great mass of æsthetic judgments which are not ultimate but derived. It has shown clearly, too, the folly of trying to reach a knowledge of poetry by any other path than by that of historical study. It would seem scarcely worth while to state the principle that developed phenomena must be studied historically, did not our study of language and literature so persistently ignore the obvious principle, expressing itself in a foolish education that begins nowhere and ends nowhere; discovers nothing, explains nothing; yields no knowledge, only a vague mass of misguided and misguiding opinion.

CHAPTER VI

EMOTIONAL CONCOMITANTS OF POETRY

In our introductory experiment with the Shakspere passage we obtained a certain number of elements which went into the composition of poetry; and by interpreting the relations of these elements to one another as general limitations of an art of poetry, we reached a definition of poetry as a body of phenomena capable of scientific study. These elements were three: the Human Interest of Literature, the Æsthetic Interest of Verse Form, and an increment in the Human Interest of Literature which appeared when the Æsthetic Interest of Verse Form was imposed upon a humanly interesting thought-formulation. In discussing the second of these elements we may have lost sight of the other two, and may have unwittingly given occasion for the opinion that the mere addition of Verse Form to words makes poetry. Let us return, therefore, to our original formula for poetry, $x + HI^n + VF$, and examine for a moment HI^n, this elevated Human Interest element of literature, as it appears in poetry. We shall, perhaps,

be able to do this best by considering the effects of poetry upon the emotions.

In the utter absence of any clear scientific treatment of the elements of literature — a treatment of the subject which would practically be an analysis of Human Interest into all the manifold forms of its manifestation in literature — it is impossible to separate clearly the aspects of Human Interest which are peculiar to poetry from those which are characteristic of literature in general. But perhaps we can reach a rough idea of the distinction such as will be sufficient for the practical purposes of preliminary study, by considering the effect of Human Interest upon the emotions; for it is in respect to the emotions that the difference between the Human Interest of poetry and the Human Interest of literature in general most clearly manifests itself. So much is this the case that the common definitions of poetry are based on the assumption that poetry is preëminently the "language of the emotions" — that in some vague, indefinable way the human soul, in its effort to consider the universe from an emotional point of view, utters itself in the language of poetry. Hence the dictum that "poetry is not science," and the common antithesis "poetry and science," which criticism has harped upon endlessly, an antithesis nearly

as meaningless as would be that of "poetry and agriculture." But there is emotion in poetry; emotion goes into the making of it and into the understanding of it — it is written in a "fine frenzy" and is likewise to be read in a "fine frenzy" — that is almost self-evident. That poetry's chief interests are emotional interests, therefore, is scarcely open to question. We have already attempted roughly to describe the effect of literature on the individual, and have pointed out the fact that this effect is directly or indirectly concerned with his emotions. Literature begins with making him recognize himself as a person, by appealing to him on the ground of his personal interests; its truth is always to be interpreted in these terms, and to be understood as relative to himself and persons like himself. And until the truth comes home to him in these personal terms, its Human Interest is *nil.* To use Bacon's fine distinction, the chief end of Literature is not to shed "dry cold light" upon his understanding, but to flood his heart with the warm "humours" of humanity. It does this in a thousand various ways; but all its avenues, whether straight or circuitous, lead ultimately to the emotions, and its knowledge is always actually or potentially couched in terms of human experience.

It was this power of transferring ideas into the domain of personal experience that Aristotle referred to when, in despair of reaching a clear notion of the art of poetry he said that 'after all, it was a genius for making metaphor.' But here, as all through his Science of Poetry, Aristotle stated what was really a fundamental principle of literature, and not a peculiar characteristic of poetry. For the very essence of metaphor is the association of ideas, and it is through associations of ideas as suggested by words that fact comes to have the Human Interest of literature. Take the word "metaphor" itself, as it was in the Greek of Aristotle's time — a "carrying over." Nothing is really "carried over" when a metaphor is used; one does not take a notion out of one part of the brain and carry it over to another part and place it in another brain pigeonhole. Yet we may think of the process that takes place when a metaphor is used as something analogous to the taking of a group of connotations properly belonging to one experience and placing them among the connotations naturally belonging to another and different experience. But such a transference of connotation is not peculiar to poetry, nor is any metaphor necessarily interesting because it is a metaphor. Such a metaphorical transference of ideas as "love is the chemical affinity which binds

together the souls of men" is quite lacking in Human Interest, and the making of such associations was not the sort of metaphor-creating power that Aristotle had in mind when he attempted to define poetry. We might call chemical affinity a sort of "love among molecules," but we should never think of love as a "chemical affinity between souls" (unless we were speaking to an audience which knew much more about chemical affinity than it knew about humanity). A metaphorical transference is always in the direction of an interesting human experience, whose associates are more or less personal and emotional, and Aristotle's "*metaphorikon einai*" must have this qualification before it can be admitted even as a formula of Human Interest. And as a formula of Human Interest it applies equally well to poetry and to prose.

For instance, I see in the evening light a group of pine trees outlining the crest of some near-by ridge. The sombre stillness, the quiet influences of the evening, the pervasive sense of mystery in the deep black shadows of the massive trees, their contiguity, their strength, their impassiveness, permanence brooding over the fleeting works of man — all these notions fill me with emotion, a feeling of human nearness to nature. The scene is no longer absolute; it is now relative, and I

desire to express this relativity to others in order to make them feel as I do. I become *metaphorikon*, and I translate the details into terms of personal experience. The trees are not mere specimens of the genus *pinus*-this or that, as the case may be; they are instinct with life; they are not mere masses of vegetation accidentally grouped upon a fold of the earth's surface; they are living creatures herded on the mountain top; they are not independent, mere unrelated points in the landscape; they commune with one another. Their communion is not trivial; they have deep thoughts; they are met to discuss a secret.

My fancy-bred picture of these pine trees and their secret is quite false; pine trees are not "herded," do not "commune," have not "thoughts," know no "secrets," and never will such relations and actions be predicable of them, even to the end of time. I have merely taken associations which belong to herded, communing, thinking, secret-telling beings, enlarged them, and placed them among the associations of a certain concrete experience of pine trees and sunset light. The concrete and actual experience suggests a notion of largeness, a notion of blackness, a notion of regularity; these natural associations of idea are tinged with a sense of mystery and stillness,

which are common emotional associates of the close of day. These two groups of associations in turn suggest near-by associations of personal communion, and these provoke emotion.

Thus, though this scene itself as it appears in the cold light of reason could never yield personal emotion, the new picture which my fancy paints for me does yield a personal emotion almost as poignant as it would be were the imagined relations of fancy the actual relations of fact. Now this process of adding emotion to fact by means of transference of associations produces a new set of connotative attributes which cluster around the connotations naturally appropriate to the things before me, and these new connotations are humanly interesting. For the human mind is ever yearning after cosmic sympathies, as one might call them, ever trying to discover hidden relations between natural phenomena and human experience. If, therefore, I merely suggest these new connotations to another mind, there is great likelihood that they will kindle in its consciousness the emotions which gave birth to the new connotations in my own mind. My interesting metaphor will thus affect his experience in a literary way. His mental vision will see trees as men walking.

Now such an effect is not peculiarly poetic.

My picture is as effective in straightforward prose-formulation as it is in the æsthetic formulation of poetry. The humanly interesting aspects of the scene before me may have expression in metaphors like those Ruskin uses in

"dim sympathies begin to busy themselves in the disjointed mass; line binds itself into stealthy fellowship with line; group by group, the helpless fragments gather themselves into ordered companies; new captains of hosts and masses of battalions become visible, one by one, and far away answers of foot to foot, and of bone to bone, until the powerless chaos is risen up with girded loins, and not one piece of all the unregarded heap could now be spared from the mystic whole."

Or in Browning's

"The herded pines commune and have deep thoughts,
A secret they assemble to discuss
When the sun drops behind their trunks which glare
Like grates of hell."

The former is undoubtedly a prose expression of thought, the latter as clearly a poetic expression of my idea. But there is no essential difference between the two in respect to metaphor; indeed Ruskin's thought is more richly laden than is Browning's — the difference lies only in the different forms by which the ideas are expressed.

It may be readily granted that the form of literary interest which Aristotle calls *metaphorikon*

is of more frequent occurrence in poetry than in prose; but it is not essentially different when it is found in poetry from what it is when found in prose. It is merely Human Interest of literature raised to the n^{th} power, we may say, by the normal conditions of poetic expression. For we have recognized as a fundamental limitation of poetry an association of poetic form with thought which possesses the maximum of interest, representative as well as interpretative and æsthetic, and we shall see later that the natural exigencies of poetic expression conduce to a widening of the ranges of association which words normally suggest. We have dwelt at some length on this matter of metaphorical interest because it is really an aspect of the representative interest of literature, and it is the representative interests of literature that are most closely associated with that "literary emotion" which we are attempting to analyse—emotions largely due to imagination and fancy.

These emotions either work directly to make their possessor or subject conscious that he is for the moment a person different from what he usually is, or work indirectly to suggest to his mind relations to men and things which would not have occurred to his thought without the stimulus of the suggestions and associations which the unusual connotations put upon his thinking.

But the emotion which proceeds from the perception of an æsthetically arranged Verse Form has quite a different source. It is not due primarily to the imagination; it does not awake in us a desire to alleviate pain by lifting the

"Weary weight of all this unintelligible world"

— a "metaphorical" expression of the humanity-ward aspect of literary emotion — or to partake of the joy when

"God renews his ancient rapture"

— an equally fine metaphorical expression of its God- and Nature-ward aspect. It is rather the emotion which comes from the perception of a fitting and harmonious adaptation, and its source lies in the Æsthetic Sentiment, not in the Imagination. It may have physical concomitants like the other; when the musician becomes aware of a delicate fitness of tone or stress harmonies, he experiences a "thrill" of emotion sometimes so poignant as to start tears; when the lawyer listens to a cleverly constructed argument whose every part harmoniously fits into every other, he experiences such a "thrill" of emotion, though he may know to a certainty that the premises of the argument are viciously false and misleading. Similarly when we watch the orator or the preacher raising before our minds a beautiful structure of thought,

with supporting buttress of logic and cloud-capped pinnacle of figure, we feel the same "thrill," though we may know from experience that the orator or preacher off the rostrum and out of the pulpit is a fellow who daily lives in a wretched hovel of puny interests and paltry ambitions. These are æsthetic emotions, not emotions of sympathy. And they may enter very largely into the general Human Interest of literature that has no poetic form whatever. A harmonious arrangement of paragraphs, a fine subordination of parts in a sentence, a clever juxtaposition of word connotations — any of these things may produce it.

The emotion primarily due to poetry, however, is a peculiar æsthetic emotion of this sort which proceeds from the perception of certain definite arrangements and adaptations of some language concomitant (arrangements of stress-gradations as far as English poetry is concerned) in pleasing forms, for which the receiving mind has developed a natural predilection. It is the direct result of the Verse Form Interest, can only exist where Verse Form exists, and is therefore peculiar to poetic forms of expression. It must be definitively separated from the emotions attendant upon the general Human Interest of literature, if we are ever to get a clear notion of what constitutes

poetry. Until we make this separation clear and definite, we shall only flounder in rhapsodies when we come to study the emotional elements of poetry.

It is but a poor musician who cannot separate for purposes of study the emotions attendant upon the scene and libretto of an opera like *Siegfried* from the musical emotions attendant upon the orchestration. These may play into one another — reinforce one another at every turn; their emotional effects may be so interwoven with each other that when we experience them we are quite unconscious of any duality in the impression which the whole makes upon us; but drama is one thing and music another, and for the student of music the two must be sharply separated from one another. It is precisely the problem that Shakspere's poetry presents.

One may say in the language of rhapsody that the marriage of two arts produces a *tertium quid* beyond the power of reason to analyze. But be that as it may, we shall never understand the *tertium quid* until we fully understand the *primum* and *secundum* of the matter. Idly to fold our hands and say "poetry is a mystery," "literature is a mystery," "it is all mystery," is to forego every chance of a scientific understanding of either poetry or literature. And we shall have come to a strange pass indeed if, after reaching

a clear knowledge of the two elements in their separation, we shall utterly fail to understand them in their combination.

But to return to the matter of the emotional aspects of poetry. One of the most fatal confusions that have attended discussions of poetry follows from the lumping of these emotional effects together. Poetry is called the "language of the emotions," merely because the sum of emotion provoked by poetry is greater than that provoked by prose. We have already endeavoured to avoid this confusion by separating that interest which poetry possesses in consequence of its being literature, our fourth limitation, from that peculiar interest which poetry alone possesses in consequence of its being a formal appeal to the æsthetic sentiment. In other words, we might formulate the interest of poetry as affecting the emotions in this way: Truth + Emotion due to Literature + Emotion due to Verse Form.

Now we have pointed out that the Human Interest of poetry is usually greater in degree than that of prose literature, and we have said that poetic form has usually been associated with literature of a high degree of Human Interest. The reason for this is not far to seek, for it is a fundamental principle of all art that "to him that hath shall be given." In other words,

ıe addition of interesting æsthetic features is sually found in connection with things or sub-ɛcts already interesting without such addition. t is the interesting object which receives the ıvish decoration — a highly prized sword, a finely ɾrought textile. It is the interesting scene that ɛceives the enhancement of harmonious colour r proportionate form arrangement; it is the in-ɛresting theme which receives the enhancement f musical harmonies and variations. It is not trange, therefore, to find a people enhancing lready interesting thought with the added in-ɛrest of poetic form, and coming to demand that ıteresting harmonies of thought arrangement hall be married to interesting notions of life. Ɛeligion, love, war, the kinds of enthusiasm that tir men most deeply, are those which poetry ıost frequently enhances with added emotions f æsthetic interest.

But there is an additional practical reason why his should be the case with poetry. We have lready pointed out the fact that poetic expres-ion is subject to limitations, one of which is the mitation that the integrity of the thought itself annot be interfered with in order to give it ıoetic interest. The idea which is to receive ıoetic form is therefore a constant. The idiom ɾhich expresses this thought in terms of human

speech is likewise more or less of a constant, for it is a certain definite succession of speech impulses which cannot be violently altered without losing their thought-conveying power. The arrangement through which the poet appeals to the æsthetic sentiment is also a more or less constant and definite arrangement, fixed for him by the characteristics of a developed verse form.

We thus have two constants, A and B, to put into a constant form, F. It is obvious that if A and B are absolute and invariable constants, their coincidence can never be made to satisfy the conditions of F, if they do not happen to do so by the mere accident of their coming together, and poetry is therefore impossible. But we have already pointed out that an idea, A, is not and cannot be an absolute constant, but is a series of connotations the sum of which is approximate to A; we have seen that B is variable within certain narrow limits, limits which are especially exigent in English thought, where the position of a word is necessarily a determining element of its relation to the context. As far as English poetry is concerned, the range of variation possible to B is so small that it can be left out of account altogether; for wherever an alteration of the normal forms of English idiom is apparent, the interest of a thought-formulation is so weakened that it falls

outside our fundamental limitation which demands that poetry shall be literature. Practically speaking, therefore, the only variable element which lends itself to the exigencies of verse form is found in the associations or connotations of the idea itself. For example, suppose we represent a given notion by a group of connotations $a + b + c$ etc.; and a predication involving several notions by ($a+b+c$ etc.) *is* ($g + b + i$ etc.); without impairing the integrity of the original idea its formulation may stand as ($a + b_1 + c$ etc.) *is* ($g_1 + b + i$ etc.), or as ($a_1 + b_2 + c$ etc.) *is* ($g + b_2 + i$ etc.), or as ($a_2 + b + c_1$ etc.) *is* ($g_1 + b_2 + i_1$ etc.), and so on in countless ways, some one of which must fit the æsthetic form the poet desires. For instance, suppose I wish to formulate a notion like "The visualizing power of the poet traverses the whole range of human experience." It is not an absolute and perfect notion — what is "visualizing"? what is "power"? what is a "poet"? what is it to "traverse"? what is a "range of human experience"? All these are legitimate questions which my formulation of the idea fails to answer. This, then, is only one of a number of such approximately correct groups of connotative terms, and not an absolute and definitive statement at all; it is in terms of $a + b + c$ etc. But there are also a_1's, a_2's, a_3's, etc., and b_1's, b_2's, etc., and c_1's,

c_2's, etc. *ad libitum;* likewise *d*'s and *e*'s etc., of various connotative suggestiveness. For I can conceive of the "visualizing power" as "power of vivid imagination," "energy of the imaginative faculty," "an eye seeing things," a "hand touching things into life and making them real to us," a "pen describing things so vividly that we see in our imagination the things described," a "discernment of the substance of things to men who see but shadows," a "discovering of vital relations that are hid from the common understanding" — these are a few of the multitudinous forms under which the subject may pass into our thinking. And so, too, with the predicate.

Now we do not mean to say that the poet deliberately goes to work to find the peculiar one of these variations which fits the verse form he is using (though sometimes he does have to do so, as Shelley's manuscript of *Ozymandias* bears eloquent witness); but the quick selective power of his imagination and his sense of speech-rhythm does it for him; just as a craftsman finds immediately out of a thousand possible movements that peculiar movement of eye, nerve, and muscle which will guide and force the tool he uses to do the work he requires. Because he makes the selection at once, he does not do it either by chance or by inspiration. The happy coördination of

the craftsman's physical activities is not essentially different from the happy coördination of mental activities which produces the poet's verse. Neither poet nor craftsman is at any time in the course of his work beyond the domain of law.

Now the poet is not only a maker of verse, he is also a maker of literature; and it is just by means of variations in the involved associations of a thought-formulation, the "*metaphorikon einai*," that there is given to it the literary interest which connects the thought of one mind with the emotional experience of others. The poet, therefore, in seeking to satisfy the æsthetic conditions of his verse form, inevitably heightens the Human Interest of his thought, and poetry naturally becomes literature which has the highest degree of Human Interest. In other words, HI appears in poetry as HI". In this way those extravagances of association by which

> "The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling
> Doth glance from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven"

become a natural concomitant of poetic thought, and from being a concomitant of poetry, come to be regarded as a characteristic of poetry. These unusual and far-reaching associations are not, however, restricted to poetry — all speech is full of them. Indeed, in the history of language develop-

ment, it is most often the outlying associate of a notion that comes to stand for the notion itself. We may say that prose is "poetic" and that language is "fossil poetry," with a half-meaningless usage of the term "poetry," whenever the prose or the word contains what seems to be a far-fetched and dear-bought association. But such associations are no more poetic than they are prosaic. Their frequent appearance in poetry does not make poetry the "language of the emotions"; some of our simplest and commonest speech-idioms are equally "language of the emotions."

If, therefore, extravagance of association appears in poetry more frequently than in prose, it is because of the natural limitations of poetry itself; it is not an essential element of poetry. And it is not even a constant concomitant of poetry. For in good poetry such extravagance of association never appears where it is inappropriate to the subject-matter. Shakspere is perhaps most conspicuous among poets for this extravagance, but in Shakspere it is never misplaced and bombastic; though it sometimes may seem so to us who do not know the imaginative richness of the Elizabethan vocabulary as applied to everyday life, and who constantly put upon Elizabethan words associations which they did not have to Elizabethan minds. But Shakspere,

with his rare good sense, always adds the richness of association precisely where it belongs, so that its interest is never out of place. And it is so in all good poetry. In all good prose, too, where this heightened interest appears, the same canon of fitness applies to its use. To make stirring appeal to the emotions where the thought is not and cannot be of emotional interest is just as foolish in the one form of expression as in the other.

This element, then, is not peculiar to poetry, nor can its presence or absence in any way determine essentially poetic qualities. The student of poetry must take account of it, but it is one of those things which he should study as a literary aspect of poetry, not as an essential element of poetry.

But besides this increase in Human Interest which is due to the wider emotional range of "ideation," as we may perhaps somewhat clumsily term it, there is another increment of Human Interest which is associated with the poetic form itself. This, in its relation to English poetry, we will take up later, after we have examined into the nature of English verse forms. But we may perhaps profitably advert to it here, considering it in its relation to the Human Interest of literature.

In a subsequent chapter we shall see that English Verse Form Interest is based upon elements of English speech-material which give æsthetic forms in terms of relaxations and intensities of attention — a diastole and systole of mental effort; and that these rhythm-forms are almost infinitely variable within certain limits of a typical rhythm-wave.

Much of our human experience has associated with it certain definite forms of motion. We talk of the "straightforwardness" of truth; we tell things "out," that is, straight away from a point of rest; we think of honesty as being a "downright" quality; we think of the "straight path" of virtue; we think of truth as a "direct" quality. On the other hand, the liar "doubles on himself"; the ways of the evil person are "crooked"; the wrong is the "twisted course." These are all notions of physical motions which have come to be associated with conduct.

As connotations of physical motions these associates can be interpreted in terms of rhythm. And not only these, but a host of other experiences have associates which can be either directly represented or indirectly suggested in terms of rhythm. Given, therefore, an infinitely variable rhythm as an æsthetic adornment to the thought-formulation, we should expect that its rhythm-forms would naturally associate themselves, where

this is possible, with rhythmic associates of the thought itself. And these fitnesses are not far to seek when we look for them. A single illustration must suffice us here; take Othello's defence before his judges.

We have here a man conscious of rectitude dishonestly accused and relying on the straightforward defence of honest truth-telling. He says: —

" Most potent grave and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have tane away this old man's daughter
It is most true: true I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more."

A straightforward, manly defence in simple direct forward-flowing rhythm: no halts, no pauses; one reversal ("true I have married her") but a strong and certain one, marking no shift in the thought, but a turning-point in the narrative.

Contrast this with Iago's defence, a tortuous, twisting, uncertain apology, when Othello accuses him of conspiring against his friend.

" I do beseech you,
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,

' " × ' ' × " ' × '
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
' " ' × ' × × ' " ' × "
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
" ' × ' " ' " ' × "
Shapes faults that are not — that your wisdom yet
&c."

The rhythm most aptly reflects the man merely by suggesting the associates of motion which fit such a character.

This reflection of the character of the thought in the rhythm of its impulses is not primarily an Æsthetic Interest, but a Human Interest, and most assuredly helps to sharpen those Representative Interests which bring these men and their affairs into touch with our sympathies.

Such illustrations of a heightening of literary interest due solely to rhythm-associates of thought or action can be found everywhere in our best poetry. And they, too, add their quota to the Human Interest of poetry and affect the emotions. But like the others, they are not peculiar to poetry, but belong to prose literature as well. One need only refer to the passage quoted above from Ruskin to see their force in making a vivid picture to our imagination. Their appearance in poetry is, of course, more frequent because the advantages of a regularly recurring ictus give the poet a better opportunity to use them, and the activity of his



imagination in seeking new forms in which to clothe his thought naturally suggests an appropriate rhythm garb for them. But, like the others, they are not essentially poetic phenomena, and, at least for the present, are better referred to the general interests of literature than to the special interests of poetry. Let us for the present, then, group them under our HI^n formula.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

In the preceding chapters we have attempted to consider scientifically the general phenomena of poetry; we have conceived of these phenomena as resulting from a mode of thought-formulation possessing a peculiar human interest. To what fundamental cause in the organization of the human mind is due the interest of this peculiar mode of thought-formulation is a question we have left for the psychologist to answer. But assuming this interest as a fact, we have endeavoured to delimit carefully the mode of thought which possesses this peculiar human interest from those other modes of thought-formulation which do not possess it.

In seeking to delimit the poetic mode of thought-formulation from the non-poetic mode, we arrived at certain fundamental and general limitations of poetry. We found that the general definite limitation of the poetic mode consisted in an appeal to the æsthetic sentiment by æsthetic arrange-

ments of material involved in the formulation of thought. We discovered that this æsthetic appeal was subject to certain particular limitations. These were: —

That the appeal is to an æsthetic sense of rhythm.

That its form is conditioned by the character of the material which the mind develops for use in its non-poetic thinking processes.

That the poetic form cannot interfere with the efficient employment of this thinking material.

That poetic form is usually found in conjunction with formulated thought which, independently of the poetic form, possesses a general and abiding Human Interest.

And we reached the conclusion that these limitations condition all that literature which we commonly regard as poetry, whatever be the language in which it is formulated.

We then went on to consider more in detail the material and form of the poetic appeal. This we found to be fundamentally an æsthetic arrangement of the various parts of a thought-formulation. To put it in a more concrete form: The fundamental characteristic of poetic form is the presence of a potentially æsthetic verse structure.

This verse structure might or might not be "punctuated," as we called it, by additional æsthetic arrangements of some language-concomitant normally present when thought is formulated. Taking up the various possible punctuation materials, there appeared to us to be the following: —

The articulation-character of the language impulses considered as groups of vowels and consonants.

The relative time-duration of these impulses.

The relative intensities of these impulses as determined by accent.

The relative intensities of these impulses as determined by their logical and emotional significance, which we called "attention stress."

We found that the æsthetic sentiment developed a sensitiveness to these various punctuating forms according to the natural resources and characteristics of the mind's thought-formulating material.

Our conclusion was that the Verse Form Interest of poetry was due to a potentially æsthetic verse structure, usually emphasized and made clear by some one or other of these systems of punctuation.

The general notion of poetry we thus obtained

was: ideas normally formulated in the terms of correlated sound-group-images, possessing the general and abiding human interest of literature, and rendered æsthetically interesting by being couched in some recognizably æsthetic Verse Form. Or, stated as a formula: $x + HI + VF$.

We found that the imposition of the Verse Form, VF, was generally attended by an increase in Human Interest not directly due to æsthetic causes; or, in other words, that our HI was usually in poetry HI^{x}. These interesting concomitants of Verse Form we attempted somewhat roughly to seize upon and determine in the last chapter.

Many of these points as here outlined we have had to touch upon but superficially; for our purpose has rather been to lay a firm foundation for the scientific study of our own poetry, than to provide a complete analysis of the æsthetics of poetry in general. We have also been hampered by the fact that general notions of language and speech phenomena, even in the minds of professed scientists, are far more vague and unscientific than they should be. For the psychologist has little time for language study, and the material that is accessible to him in ordinary treatises is for the

most part unscientific and worthless. The scientific study of language as a series of continuous phenomena due to a continually developing mental organism is yet in its infancy, and much of the scientific work in this field must wait upon the work of the psychologist for its confirmation and illumination.

What we need on the one hand is a psychological (and not a pedantic and metaphysical) philology, and on the other hand a philological psychology; on the one hand men who see in language and literature the phenomena of associational mental processes and not the inspired vocables of a mysterious idiom; and on the other, men who see in the phenomena of language and literature the historical evidence of a continually developing mentality.

Such a scientific study of the phenomena of language and literature is a *Nuptiæ Philologiæ et Mercurii*, to use Capella's florid phrase, yet to be consummated. Indeed, it might almost be said that the intending parties to such a contract as yet do not know each other. Failing scientific formulation and scientific terminology, therefore, we have had to look at our subject as through a glass, darkly. It is to be hoped, however, that we have gained some glimpses from even this imperfect consideration of the fundamental char-

acter of our phenomena that will enable us more clearly to apprehend the wonderful beauty and perfection of our English verse form, and more enthusiastically to study the development of our English poetry.





BOOK II

THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF ENGLISH VERSE FORM



CHAPTER VIII

THOUGHT-MOMENTS IN ENGLISH VERSE

In the following chapter we shall endeavour to make good the thesis: *that the thought-moment structure is an integral element of our English verse form.*

We have already in the former part of our treatise endeavoured to state a theory of the origin of poetic form which assumes that a rhythmic structure of ideation, and not a rhythmic structure of some speech concomitant of ideation, is the original state out of which poetic form was developed. But we have not sufficiently proved this theory, and indeed, it is scarcely susceptible of conclusive proof, because for its evidences it reaches back in the history of speech to a period of which we have no historical remains. We can logically regard it, therefore, only as a hypothesis which explains certain puzzling conditions in the history of poetry which our ordinary theories do not explain.

But what we have called the thought-moment structure is an element that, despite all variations of poetic form, has from the beginning been

present in English poetry. It is recognized by our prosody in the term "a verse," but its essential nature is quite misconstrued, and for all that we are taught to the contrary, it might fail to exist without affecting our prosodic theory.

If we turn to Shakspere's cxlvi[th] sonnet, we shall have before us a concrete illustration of a complete English poem written in a form of verse, viz., what we shall hereafter term "a five-wave series in single rising rhythm," which is perhaps the commonest and surely the most effective of all English verse forms. And no one would for a moment dispute the statement that this short poem, in the compass of its fourteen lines yields the very maximum of æsthetic pleasure. It runs:—

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
[Hemmed by][1] these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;

[1] Accepting for the nonce Dr. Furnivall's conjecture as to what the missing words of this originally misprinted verse are; for Shakspere seems to be thinking of the soul as a besieged city here and in v. 11.

Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then."

What are the thought-moments in this sonnet? As we examine the course of its ideation it seems to fall into the following groups of notions: —

"Poor soul,
The centre of my sinful earth,
Hemmed by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within,
And suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost,
Having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms,
Inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge?
Is this thy body's end?

Then, soul,
Live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine,
In selling hours of dross;
Within be fed,
Without be rich no more:

So shalt thou feed on Death,
That feeds on men,
And Death once dead,
There's no more dying then."

Now while this arrangement is an element of the beauty of the poem which we might overlook, it is nevertheless a most important one; if we marred it by additions to and subtractions from each thought-moment, we should produce much the same effect that would result from similar arbitrary alterations of the phrasing of a musical composition. For we should in the one case be changing without reason the pulses of ideation which are normal concomitants of the thought and of themselves form rhythmic cadences, just as in the other we should be altering the pulses of emotion, which, being the normal concomitants of the music, are in themselves an integral part of its rhythm.

The first moment-group is thus "Poor soul," the second "the centre of my sinful earth." Considered merely as thought, there is no reason why we should not print these first words as

> "Poor soul
> The centre of my sinful earth"

if the distinction is only one of type-setting to indicate pauses in the ideation; for the pause after "soul" is just as great as that after "earth."

And so with the third line. The second, fourth, and sixth lines, however, present larger groups of ideation; and the printing

"Hemmed by these rebel powers
That thee array" [1]

or

"Painting thy outward walls
So costly gay"

or

"Dost thou
Upon thy fading mansion spend"

would rather hinder than help the flow of ideation. If we had no clew to the arrangement furnished by the poet, or by the printer acting under the poet's direction, we should still be able to perceive in our sonnet a rhythmic arrangement of moments which would be something like the arrangement which we have given. There is a further arrangement of "themes," as we may call them, which we have indicated in the printing. But this is a peculiarity of the sonnet-form, and we need not, therefore, consider it here.

In the sonnet we have before us this "phrasing," as we might call it, gives our poem a pecul-

[1] There is a slight division at "powers," caused by the newness of the notion and the emotional significance of "enemies of the soul"; but the restrictive relative notion in "these . . . that" links the two parts together so that for purposes of demonstration we may consider the line as a pauseless series of ideation-impulses. We must remember, too, that a certain latitude of interpretation is permissible here just as in musical phrasing; but here, as in musical phrasing, the latitude never permits arbitrary alterations of the rhythm-series.

iar "symphonic" character. "But the sonnet is a peculiar form of verse composition; are we not, therefore, making the mistake," some one may say, "of generalizing from a non-essential, a mere accident of the verse form?" By no means. Any good English poem will show similar pulses of ideation-groups, or thought-moments as we have called them, which, though they may not be arrayed in the same formal sequences we have here, are necessarily concomitants of the poetic structure. For wherever there is a verse there is a unit of moment-phrasing, and no English poetry will appeal to an English æsthetic sentiment unless it presents a clearly defined verse structure. It is easy to illustrate this from our so-called "blank verse."

In good blank verse, as distinct from rhythmically stressed prose, there is always a clear pause in the thought, or in the emotion attendant upon it, when a series of five wave-groups is completed, and this larger moment of the thought is usually an arrangement of two or more unequal minor moments, which always sum the length of five-wave groups. For instance, in *Lear*, III. 2. 42 ff. we have: —

> "Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night
> Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
> Gallow the very wanderers of the dark

And make them keep their caves; since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard."

It needs no rhyme to tell us that the thought-moments are here arranged in groups measured by five rhythm-waves. But suppose we wrote it:—

"Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love the gloom of night, love not such nights as these of wrathful skies that terrify the very wanderers of the dark and make them keep their caves; since I was man such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder, such groans of roaring wind and dash of blinding rain I never remember to have heard."

Here we have practically the same words and the same rhythms, and much the same moments of thought. But *the rhythm does not punctuate the thought-moments into symmetrical groupings*, and the English æsthetic sentiment misses the verse form that it is used to, perceiving only a sort of regularly cadenced prose.

But we need not go so far afield for our illustrations; a passage of rhythmically stressed prose is introduced by Shakspere himself in *Macbeth*, V. 1. 25 ff.[1]

[1] Such prose is frequently met with in Elizabethan plays.

(*Lady Macbeth enters with a taper*)

Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman (*attendant*). Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doctor. You see her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense are shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

In Elizabethan English the sequence of syllabic impulses here almost perfectly fulfils the conditions of single rising rhythm; only the grouping of the rhythm-phrases into verses is absent. Yet the printer of the folio did not set the text as poetry, nor has any Shakspere editor of repute ventured upon the "improvement" — and many of them have had but slight scruples about improving Shakspere's text — of arranging this prose in blank verse form.

Obviously, then, something more than a mere regularly cadenced succession of syllables is necessary to make poetry that will be acceptable to an English æsthetic sentiment for verse form.

"Run on" verses, as they are called, undoubtedly do occur in English poetry; but they are usually punctuated by a rhyme-word marking an artificial pause in the ideation, or by a very slight pause in the emotion which accompanies the ideation; one does not find such a group as *to have*

been, for example, where no emotion or ideation pause is possible, divided so that *to have* forms the close of one verse and *been* begins the next verse following. Such verse division is intolerable, because it at once destroys the verse form; the æsthetic sentiment will no more permit two and one to make four than will the reason.

But perhaps we can better illustrate the fact that the rhythm of thought-moments is an essential element of verse by taking two passages from one of Whitman's so-called[1] poems, viz., *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*: —

"Blow Blow Blow
Blow up sea winds along Paumonock's shore
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me."

(The spaces mark off the thought-moments as we conceive them.)

Here there is nothing at all to mark the ideation as being rhythmic — no outward punctuating element. Yet the mind receives something like an æsthetic impression from the thought, because

[1] It is not with any intention of making an invidious distinction of criticism that we use the epithet "so-called," but merely to denote the fact that there are many persons of presumably trustworthy æsthetic judgment who would honestly call this and similar thought-formulations, English poetry. And it would be unwise for us in a treatise dealing with fundamental and elementary forms of poetry to enter this borderland of poetic phenomena save for purposes of illustration.

the formulation of the thought runs along in triplets which the mind can easily perceive. If there were in the neighbourhood of this idea as thus formulated other ideas in which the thought-moments were punctuated into rhythmic series by some external concomitant of the ideation, the æsthetic sentiment would be offended with these verses and fail to recognize them as containing any æsthetic appeal whatever. But if the mind once realizes the fact that there is no such punctuating system in the thought-formulation, and becomes aware of an honest intention on the poet's part to present his thought in a rhythmic way, it will rise to meet the emergency and unassisted punctuate for itself by emotional groupings his apparently formless ideation. And such an honest intention of poetic form many of us will find in Whitman's verse, "literary critics" notwithstanding. And such an attitude of mind we assume for the generous and catholically minded reader.

But now take from the same poem a thought whose ideation is more formless: —

"O night do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?"

Here it requires a much greater mental effort to catch the pulse of the thought, and when the

mind does catch it, it is so vague and uncertain that one fears perhaps he has after all missed the poet's intention. In the last so-called "verse" of an arrangement which the poet, from the way he points it, clearly intends to be a couplet, the thought-rhythm is so broken up by the insertion of sharp details, "little," "black thing," "see," "there," "the white," that this baffling uncertainty is aggravated to the point of despair.

Only the most charitable English rhythm-sense could consider this to be poetry. And its ragged incompleteness, its hopeless lack of definition, its confusing twists and turns and vagaries would interfere with any, even the vaguest perception of æsthetic arrangement. But the first passage quoted from this poem shows clearly how ready is the English mind, once given its cue that the thought it reads is intended as poetry, to perceive a fundamentally æsthetic arrangement of thought-moments, even though all the punctuating forms its æsthetic sense is used to associating with such arrangement be entirely lacking. And this would not be the case were the rhythmic thought-moment structure of English poetry a mere accident of the imposition of poetic form.

In these illustrations from Whitman we have a form of poetry, if we may call it poetry, depend-

ing solely on thought-moment structure in an ideation series that is vaguely rhythmic. But in some of Whitman's poetry, and the most open-minded will be prepared to admit that it is the best of Whitman's poetry, the thought-moment structure, though quite unpunctuated by any outward concomitant, is sharp and clear and essentially poetic, without being susceptible of any formal classification under the rubrics of known English verse forms. Take such a stanza of this same poem as: —

"Two together!
Winds blow south and winds blow north,
Day come white or night come black,
Home or rivers and mountains away from home,
Singing all time minding no time,
While we two keep together."

Here we have an ideation that is only classifiable as grammatical when conceived as a rhapsodic utterance of feeling under the form of an exclamatory sentence; and there is no regular æsthetic punctuating form under which the verses will fall — no quantitative, accentual, emphatical, or stress system of recurrences, though the stress pulses are roughly rhythmic. Yet an English mind, on the mere hint of the printer who sets the thought in lines, will accept it as having something like a poetic form; and to most

English minds the form will be a pleasure-giving form. In other words, one must admit in this thought the presence of an approximately poetic structure. Why? Because the thought-moments themselves pulse in a rhythmic flow of pairs as we have marked them off, pairs which are determined by the emotional concomitants of the intellection. *Two* — "the he-bird and the she-bird" as the poet's homely idiom describes them — *together*, the eternal meaning of spring-time — "lilac scent was in the air and the Fifth-month grass was growing." This binary emotion-key, as one might term it, sets the emotion-phrasing for the whole sequence, and the poet, spite of all the liberties he is in the habit of taking with English speech, is very careful not to disturb this binary arrangement. Much of Whitman's poetry is of this sort; other of it, alas, is mere formless ideation that is neither interesting prose nor even tolerable poetry. But where any poetic form is recognizable, it will be found to rest upon a more or less æsthetic arrangement of thought-moments punctuated into definite sequences by emotional pulses.

Now let us examine another form of so-called English poetry in which the thought-moments are not, as in Whitman's verse, unaccompanied by an external punctuating form, but are marked

off by an external punctuating form that is unusual in literary Modern English. The poet himself thought it so unusual that he says of it: "The metre of *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle; namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from ten to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion (*i.e.* emotion?)." But Coleridge unfortunately was quite unfamiliar with the fact that this mode of poetry which he occasionally uses as a "new principle" had been in constant use in English for twelve centuries, and that in one form or other it was the only punctuating system for English poetry from the seventh to the eleventh centuries, and has survived in ballad poetry to this day.

Nor does he use it with strict accuracy: —

"'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,"

for instance, is a normal verse of rising mixed rhythm (as we shall call it) so common in English poetry that any English mind would receive it as

such, and not as a "new-principle" verse; while the first verse in

> "Is the night chilly and dark?
> The night is chilly but not dark."

has only three "accented" syllables, and "all the king's horses and all the king's men" cannot make it have four, since nowhere in the preceding context is it directly stated or indirectly implied that the night is either "chilly" or "dark."

What we have, therefore, in *Christabel* is a series of thought-moments which are usually punctuated by the normal Modern English recurrent rhythm series; but are sometimes punctuated by four stresses separated by irregular unstressed intervals, and sometimes wholly unpunctuated. This gives us a mixed verse form that is neither the normally punctuated verse, which our æsthetic sentiment is familiar with, nor unpunctuated verse like Whitman's, nor yet the stress punctuated verse of early ballad poetry, but a hopelessly confusing mixture of all three. Again in the last verse of

> "A little door she opened straight,
> All in the middle of the gate,
> The gate that was ironed within and without,
> Where[1] an army in battle array had marched out."

we have a line of pure prose with six stressed impulses.

[1] Because *where* means "through which."

Such verse is intolerable to the English æsthetic sentiment because it is continually "out of tune and harsh," disappointing the expectation of regular recurrences which it establishes, in favour of an entirely different æsthetic norm, and then often violating this new norm in favour of an abnormal and entirely unpunctuated verse form. It does not show, therefore, the impracticability of any one of the three different verse forms found in it, but the impossibility of a heterogeneous mixture of the three in one short poem. It is a sort of acrobatic exercise in æsthetics.

But there is a pleasure-giving form of English verse which is not punctuated by definite numerical sequences of groups of rhythm-waves, but depends largely upon the perception of the thought-moments for its æsthetic effect. This is the so-called "ode." It is apparently an exotic in our prosody introduced by a supposed imitation of a certain kind of classic verse; but it is really so *eingebürgert* or naturalized in our literature that it has become a normal form of poetic appeal to an English æsthetic sentiment. Perhaps the best illustration of it is found in Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.* Let us look at one of its best stanzas: —

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

Here the numerical sequence of the rhythm-groups is 5, 5, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 3, 5, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 4, 3, 3, 5, 5, and this series is different in the various stanzas. Obviously, then, it is not the sense of a regular numerical series that punctuates the verse into stanzas. We get our perception of the verse structure from the thought-moments. It is true that the thought-moments in this ode are punctuated by rhymes, but there are good English odes which do not furnish even this

guide to the verse grouping. The verse is cadenced, too, by recurrent groups of rising rhythm-waves, but we have already noticed the fact that such cadenced thought-formulation does not normally appeal to the English æsthetic sentiment as being verse form. Clearly, then, the verse form is determined by the rhythmic flow of the thought-moments.

This rhythmic flow is wholly determined by emotion, just as the phrasing is determined in a musical composition; and the emotional phrasing is not always coincident with the intellection; for instance, in

> "Trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home."

the emotional associations attach to the manner of the soul's advent in the world, "trailing clouds of glory do we come," which quite separates the normal groups of ideation; these would have been

> "Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God,
> Who is our home.

Yet these moments, determined in this way, are always clear and in most cases inevitable, which is the very crux of ode structure, even without the added punctuation of rhyme. And such a series of ideation as this of Wordsworth's is quite different from the transmogrified blank

verse of our *Lear* illustration, in making upon the æsthetic sentiment a sharp and definite impression of ordered arrangement; and it needs not the printer's help to force the arrangement upon our attention. One might even go so far as to say that such an ode as this of Wordsworth's, stripped of its rhythmic cadence as well as of its rhyme, and reduced to a form like that of Whitman's verse, would still be a thing of beauty.

The principle, then, that we deduce from these illustrations is that *the thought-moment structure is a fundamental element of English poetry; that this æsthetic structure is punctuated by an æsthetic rhythm-arrangement, and not determined by regular numerical series of "feet."* In other words, that English verse structure is not an accident of our prosody, but that prosodic form is an accident of verse structure. For the English mind will not recognize a series of rhythmic impulses as a verse form unless they are applied to an already æsthetic thought-moment structure, though it will vaguely receive rhythmic successions of thought-moments punctuated only by emotion-pulses as an essentially æsthetic, though unusual, form of poetic expression.

CHAPTER IX

OUR ENGLISH VERSE PUNCTUATION SYSTEM NOT QUANTITATIVE OR ACCENTUAL, BUT BASED UPON STRESS

We have just seen that English poetry furnishes no exception to the principle that the thought-moment structure is the fundamental element of verse form. The question arises: What is the punctuating system that is associated with the definition of these thought-moments?

We have been anticipating the answer to this question in seeking to make clear the presence of verse structure; and we could not well do otherwise without falling into a form of phraseology that would be hard to understand on account of its general and catholic character. If, in speaking of Shakspere's sonnet, for instance, we had said that the punctuating system of the verse was a coincidence of five mental impressions of a definite character with the completion of a single thought-moment, or of an approximately equivalent series of short ones, we should have had to repeat or modify a most clumsy and abstract terminology. Our anticipation of the fact that

English verse punctuation depends upon certain definite sequences of stress waves was merely for the purposes of convenience. Let us, however, suppose we have taken the more general terminology and are, at this stage of our argument, entirely ignorant of what is the nature of the English verse punctuating system.

If we refer to Book I., Chapter V., we shall see that several systems are possible. As the impression made upon the mind in reading poetry is that of a series of speech concomitants in regular order, we may at once dismiss the possibility of our English verse form having a punctuating system of formal connotative variations such as is conspicuous in Hebrew poetry. We are then limited to external speech concomitants, or to something related to them.

Alliteration is obviously out of the question because it is merely an accidental feature of English poetry, often not appearing at all in thought-formulations which are undeniably poetic.

We have left, then, either quantitative or qualitative differentiation of thought-impulses as our material.

Our current prosody is all couched in terms of quantitative differentiations, making use of *metre* in describing verse units, *feet* in describing group-impulse units, *iambus*, *trochee*, *dactyl*, *anapest* in

determining single group units. We are told that English poetry is written in "iambic pentameters," or "trochaic tetrameters," or "dactylic hexameters," or "anapestic tetrameters," or "iambic dimeters," etc., and we have even such monstrosities in English prosody as "monometers." All this nomenclature, so hardly pressed and so barbarously misapplied, would indicate that there is something, at least, of a quantitative nature in the determining elements of our verse punctuation, and that our English verse forms are, at least in their general aspects, like those of classic poetry.

This general likeness rests upon the assumption that an English accented syllable is equivalent to a classic long syllable, and an English unaccented syllable is equivalent to a classic short syllable, and that therefore an English iambus, for instance, even when made up of elements not strictly quantitative, produces the same effect upon the English æsthetic sentiment that the classic iambus produced upon the æsthetic sentiment of a Greek or Roman.

We shall not try to overthrow this assumption, which is founded upon an ignorance of English and an imperfect or distorted knowledge of Latin and Greek; but let us see if there is any æsthetic arrangement of quantitatively determined elements

in the verse form of the sonnet of Shakspere which we had before us.

To examine the whole sonnet for these quantitatively determined verse elements would be too tedious: let us take the concluding couplet: —

> "So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
> And Death once dead, there's no more dying then."

So contains a diphthong, *ou* (though there is no diphthong in the spelling, for the spelling is Middle English); the first impulse, then, is long. In *shalt* the vowel is short, the English half-*ă* half-*ĕ* sound represented by *ă̆*; though this *ă̆* is followed by two consonants, *l* and *t*, these are in English so closely articulated that we may put the syllable down as short. (It really would not affect the question one whit if we put it down as long.) The third impulse in respect to its quantity is long, for it contains the diphthong *au*; the fourth is likewise long, for it contains the long vowel *ī* (though written *ee* in our Middle English spelling); the fifth impulse is obviously short, *ŏn*; the sixth impulse *Death* contains two consonants separated by a long open *ę̄* (though this *e* is frequently so vague in length as to be equivalent to a short vowel, we may safely think of it as long here, for we cannot hurry the utterance of the word without spoiling to some extent its poetic association).

The seventh impulse is short again, the eighth as clearly long, the ninth short, and the tenth short.

Our series then is

"So shalt thou feed on death that feeds on men."[1]

as far as the relative time values of the successive impulses goes. Similarly the following verse runs: —

"And Death once dead there's no more dying then."

Now what is the unit in the first verse of this couplet? Is it a "trochee" as in the first foot, if we call it a "foot"? But the next foot is a "spondee"! and the next is an "iambus"! and the last is a "pyrrhic"! This one verse of Shakspere's, therefore, is neither trochaic, iambic, spondaic, or pyrrhic, but a "trochaic-spondaic-iambic-pyrrhic pentameter"! That is, it repre-

[1] It may be said that this quantitative determination ignores the effect of position, and that two consonants following a vowel make it long. But classic rules for position do not hold in English speech; if they did we should have here a succession of syllables every one of which was long except the last, and similarly in the next verse. We shall see later that quantity of syllables is affected by the character of the following consonants and that quantitative elements do play an important rôle in English verse. What we are trying to make clear here, however, is that they are not determining elements of English verse form; we, therefore, leave out the matter of positional quantity as making our illustration unnecessarily tedious.

sents all the possible variations of dissyllabic metre. And the second is no better, three "spondees," one "iambus," one "trochee."

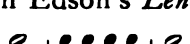
But possibly we are making a mistake in taking a dissyllabic measure: let us try the trisyllabic feet. We begin with a "cretic" _⏑_; the second foot is likewise a "cretic," the third is an "amphibrach" _⏑_, and we have a "short" left over. The next verse begins with a "molossus" ___, which is followed by a "bacchic" ⏑__, which is in turn followed by a "molossus" (if "-ing" in "dying" is considered short, the foot is an "antibacchic"), with an extra short syllable left over. That is, this poetry is written in brachycatalectic trimeters made up of "cretics," "bacchics," "antibacchics," and "amphibrachs"! And so we might go on with the quadrisyllabic series, seeking in vain to classify the metre of these two verses into intelligible categories of quantitative rhythms; but the task were too tedious, too absurd. It is sufficiently evident that these two verses of English poetry do not contain any intelligible æsthetic arrangement of units in terms of definite time proportions. And what is true of these verses would be equally true for any passage of English poetry we might choose to examine.

But the reader may say that there is some regularly arranged time-element in English poetry,

even though we have failed to find it; else how could English poetry be set to music? The answer is easy. When English poetry is set to music, the impulses are given an artificial time-duration to suit the music. That it is an artificial apportionment of time is evident from the fact that a single hymn can be sung to a number of different tunes in which a given thought-impulse may have a number of different time-values. In "*Lead, Kindly Light,*" for instance, as the words are sung to Dyke's *Lux Benigna* the time series is ; as sung to Peace's *Lux Beata,* it is . The element which determines musical phrasing when poetry is set to music is rhythm, not time, and even this is sometimes altered to fit the rhythm of the music: in Wesley's hymn which begins "Blow ye the trumpet, blow" the verses

> "The gladly solemn sound
> Let all the nations know
> To earth's remotest bound"

are each phrased in Edson's *Lenox,*



giving secondary stresses to the normally unstressed words "The," "Let," and "To," and reducing the primary stresses of "sol-" "na-" "mo-" to the secondary grade, with a total disregard of the

quantity and a very striking modification of the normal rhythmic sequences of the sound-impulses.

In view of the facts we have been speaking of, — and these are but a few of the difficulties one encounters in trying to describe as groups of time-impulses the units of arrangement in the punctuation system of English poetry, — we had better quite give over all effort to square English verse form with quantitative punctuating systems. These practical difficulties, too, are even less than the theoretical difficulties; for how is a language in which the time consciousness of syllabic impulses in the thought is so vague and undetermined as it is in English, ever to develop quantitative systems of arrangement as a means of punctuating its verse form?

But let us examine our two verses from Shakspere in respect to accent series. This problem is easier than the other; but it will not be so easy to reach an irrefragable conclusion in regard to the absurdity of considering accent-units as determining elements of English verse form, as it has been to demonstrate the absurdity of considering the time-durations of syllabic impulses as the determining elements of English verse form.

We must bear in mind that an iambus or a trochee is composed of two elements, – and ⏑, in such proportions that two short syllables are always equal

to one long one. If this proportion is altered, an iambus ceases to be an iambus and a trochee ceases to be a trochee. When, therefore, we substitute accentual for quantitative relations, an accented syllable must be an accented syllable beyond question, and an unaccented syllable likewise must be an unmistakably unaccented syllable, else the whole distinction which marks a "foot" falls to the ground. Moreover, if two accented syllables come together, they can only make a spondee, never an iambus or a trochee; else a trochee will be equivalent to a spondee, an iambus will be also equivalent to a spondee, an iambus and a trochee will be the same thing, and our whole verse system will break down. In

> "So shalt thou feed on Death that feeds on men,
> And Death once dead, there's no more dying then"

we have but one instance of accent, viz., that contained in the first syllable of "dying"; so obviously something must take its place in the verse form as a determining element, if there is any verse form at all in the thought-formulation. Emphasis and accent are the same thing, one will say. Granting for the nonce that they are identical, how is our couplet determined into a verse form by emphasis?

As accentually determined verse must consist

of either dissyllabic or trisyllabic feet, and the general impression produced by the verse form of the poem of which these two lines form a part is that of an alternating sequence, let us for the sake of brevity assume a dissyllabic foot for the basis of our verse form. The first question that we have to settle is, what is "So shalt," an iambus, or a trochee, or a spondee? "So" being the emphatic word and "shalt" a mere auxiliary, it must be "*Só* shalt," a trochaic foot. The second foot is more difficult: "thou," the person to whom the sonnet is addressed, can scarcely be an unemphatic notion; but the notion of "feeding" on Death — "Death is swallowed up in victory" — makes "feed" also a vivid and emphatic notion; either "*thóu* feed," or "thou *feéd*" is impossible if emphasis means anything; the foot must therefore be "thóu feéd," and can hardly be other than a spondee, if an emphatic impulse corresponds to an accented syllable which is equivalent to a long syllable.

So with "*on Déath*," "on" being one of those adverbial impulses which retain at least a part of their adverbial stress, and must therefore be rendered with some emphasis. "That *feeds*" must be an iambus, and be equivalent to ∪ –; "*on mén*," again, is a spondee. In this emphasis-accent-quantitative system our verse is therefore (noting the emphasis by Italic type)

"*So* shalt *thou feed on Death* that *feeds on men*"

and corresponds in its æsthetic effect to the quantitative series

$$- \cup | - - | - - | \cup - | - -$$

if the theory of emphasis-accent-quantity equivalence is to hold.

Likewise the next verse must run

"And *Death once dead* there's *no more* dýing *then*"

equivalent to

$$\cup - | - - | \cup - | - - | \cup - |.$$

Of course we can warp the emphases and accents into our Procrustes bed, and consider this series as

"*So* shalt thou *feed* on *Death* that *feeds* on *men*
And *Death* once *dead* there's *no* more dýing *then*."

But such an alteration violates our fundamental limitation that the verse form cannot alter the ordinary speech relations of a language in order to secure its æsthetic arrangement; and if Shakspere's verse runs in this fashion, we cannot call it poetry. For no one thinks this English thought in this way, and no one would naturally utter these English words with the emphasis we have indicated.

There is still another expedient that may be resorted to in order to escape from the conflict between this quantitative-accentual theory of English verse form and the actual conditions which we



nd in our best English poetry. We may say
iat such verses as these we have before us cor-
:spond roughly to a typical form which is in the
oet's mind, an iambic pentameter, but vary from
in detail; we may think of Shakspere as at-
:mpting to make an iambic pentameter whose
ements are accented or emphatic syllables and
naccented or unemphatic syllables, but escaping
om the shackles of his verse form in a sort of
iumphant disregard of academic rule and produc-
ig verses whose beauty justifies their abnormal
iaracter.

But is it not a strange state of affairs that the
ithetically imperfect should produce a greater
:asure than the æsthetically perfect? And is it
t stranger that the poetry whose verse most
istantly and violently deviates from our assumed
hetic form should be the best poetry which
language affords? For no English-thinking
on will hesitate to place Shakspere's verse
i a far higher plane than Pope's, for instance,
i mathematical count of the number of devia-
from five successions of clearly accented im-
: preceded by as clearly unaccented impulses
iow an enormous majority of perfect verses
ur of Pope.

say that our English verse form is a cer-
quence of "feet," "trochaic" or "iambic,"

in certain measures, and yet we unhesitatingly prefer poetry in which this sequence is vague and all but imperceptible, to poetry in which the sequence is clear and unmistakable.

Who would hesitate for a moment in choosing between

> "Tell me not in mournful numbers
> Life is but an empty dream"

and

> "So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
> And Death once dead, there's no more dying then,"

two poetic formulations of much the same thought; the one an unmistakable sequence of "accentual trochees," the other a tortuous, difficult sequence of pairs of impulses that only with the greatest difficulty can be arranged as "accentual iambuses" —who would for a moment hesitate to pronounce æsthetic judgment in favour of the latter seemingly imperfect verses as against the former perfect ones?

There must be something wrong with an æsthetic system whose norms exist only to be violated.

In the introductory chapter we have already pointed out how inadequate is this quantitative-accentual system to describe essential characteristics of English verse. Its inadequacy is nowhere more clearly shown than in its application to Shak-

spere's sonnets. In the one hundred and fifty-four poems of which our sonnet is one, are reflected all the complex emotions of the best part of our greatest poet's life, running the gamut from the deepest despair to the highest exultation of soul, and contemplating both immortality and time with such a generic sweep that he is indeed poor of spirit who cannot find sympathy and comfort in their numbers; but to our prosody all these varied expressions of human thought and emotion are couched in a single form of five iambic feet in pentametric series — that is the beginning and the end of its knowledge, "iambic pentameter." Surely such an inadequate prosodic system is little better than no prosody at all.

Our conclusion, then, is that *the characteristic which punctuates English thought-moments into æsthetic form is neither quantity nor accent, nor yet accentually determined quantity.*

What, then, is the punctuating element of English verse? This question we shall have to postpone for its answer, until we shall have examined more clearly into the nature of attention-stress.

CHAPTER X

STRESS IN GENERAL

It is a significant fact that our earliest poetry reveals a tendency to select for the most conspicuous means of punctuating verse form, a variation in the intensity with which the various successive impulses of the thought impinge themselves upon the thinking mind. This variation has always been more significant to the English speech consciousness than it has been to the speech consciousness of other even sister peoples. And in consequence of it, our poetry is richer in variety and complexity of æsthetic effect than that of any other nation of western Europe. We have already glanced at the Old English verse form with its pairs of stressed impulses marking off in a definite way its succession of thought-moments. Even in Old English poetry, though the system of stresses is one in which the unstressed impulses are not so significant as the stressed impulses, there is clearly discernible a tendency to make the system a more or less rhythmic one. For the greater proportion of verses are constructed in

such a way as to separate the stressed impulses by intervening unstressed impulses. This rhythmic element in the punctuating system becomes more prominent through the Middle English Alliterative Poetry, until types in which it is not prominent are almost discarded. Early in the Middle English period Continental influences present to English æsthetic sentiment a punctuating system in which the rhythmic element is entirely regular, so that a single unstressed impulse always comes between two stressed impulses. These new types of verse form, with their alternating impulses, rapidly find favour and finally develop into our present punctuating system.

Externally and superficially there seems to be a break in the continuity of development when this new system supplants the old. But this break is more apparent than real. For, in the first place, the fundamental æsthetic element of both systems is the same, viz., variation in attention-stress; and, in the second place, even before the influence of this new form began to be felt, the old form was already beginning to select the regular rhythmic alternation which is the salient characteristic of the new system; and, in the third place, the conditions of the old system continued to influence the new and still influence it to this day. For we still recognize forms of verse in which two stressed

impulses follow in succession cheek by jowl without the intervention of an unstressed impulse, and just the best of our poetry is characterized by the juxtaposition of high secondary stresses with primary stresses, which is practically a succession of stressed impulses and not a succession of stressed and unstressed impulses. Our English punctuating system thus presents a continuity of development from beginning to end, despite the apparent break in its external form.

We have already pointed out the fact that in any given language the æsthetic forms through which a rhythmic arrangement of the masses of thought, so to speak, is impressed upon the mind, are conditioned by the speech-material which that language furnishes. If we have a succession of propositions A is B, C is D, etc. (to use the simplest form of predication), the various parts or moments of which propositions are in more or less rhythmic arrangement, any further development in the direction of æsthetic form will naturally depend upon an æsthetic arrangement of some "accident" of thought-expression which appears when A is B is formulated in a given language. If there is associated with A is B a group of speech-sounds in which there is a constant clear differentiation of the speech-impulses in respect to duration, the haphazard differentia-

tion of these time-impulses will naturally assume a regular æsthetic form. Again, if there is associated with A is B a group of speech-sounds in which the differentiation of the several impulses is not constant and clear in respect to their duration, but is clear and constant in respect to the intensity with which these impulses impinge themselves on the thinking mind, the development of æsthetic forms will naturally be in the direction of an æsthetic arrangement of these intensities. In other words, poetic form will depend on the speech-material of any given language.

Now in the Germanic languages, and in English especially, it is the intensity of a speech-impulse that is significant for its identity and logical relation, and not its duration. And we should expect to find the punctuating systems of Germanic poetry following the development of this intensity-element and ignoring the time-element. And we do find this to be the case. Again, we should expect to find the æsthetic development of these forms limited to such arrangements as are possible to these intensity-elements. And we do find that the æsthetic forms of punctuating thought-moments in English are only such as can be easily developed from these elements. For, practically speaking, there are only two kinds of rhythm in Germanic

poetry, rising and falling rhythms; all that complex æsthetic arrangement of time successions which is so beautifully illustrated in classic poetry is quite absent from Germanic poetry. It knows no such things as spondees and molossi, because these are not possible without proportionate time differentiations of impulses of thought.

The material, then, of our English speech definitely and finally conditions its verse forms within these certain and fixed limits. Let us examine into the nature of this material: —

This material, as we have already said, is a differentiation in respect to the intensity with which English speech-impulses impinge upon the attention of the thinking mind. We may call this differentiation a variation in the stress of attention, or, to be brief, Attention-Stress.

Let us take a normal English thought in a normal New English form of expression (though Old or Middle English would answer as well for purposes of illustration, if we were as familiar with Old English and Middle English as we are with New English), and examine its structure with reference to these stresses of attention. We had better select a prose form of expression so as not to be confused with extraneous elements. Suppose we take a brief sentence selected at random from Ruskin: —

"But what, then, is the message to us of our own poet and searcher of hearts after fifteen hundred years of Christian faith have been numbered over the graves of men?"

(The writer has been speaking of the influence of Homer and turns to discuss that of Shakspere.)

As this thought passes through an English mind, there are various points in its course on which attention is concentrated; there are other points which are passed over hurriedly and more or less unconsciously. Now while this thought upon paper seems to be made up of words, some of one syllable, others of several syllables, set alongside of one another so as to make phrases and clauses, in the actual process of thinking the word is not the unit of structure in the thought. The idea moves through the consciousness by groups of impulses, the unit of which is the syllable, not the word. For instance in "message to us," the last syllable of message has precisely the same equipollence as the whole word "to," and "message-to-us" is for all practical purposes of thinking a polysyllabic word. So with "of our own poet," "searcher of hearts," etc. In each of these it is not a group of words that we think of, but a group of syllabic impulses; and though these impulses fall into groups in such a way that they begin and close with entire words, the unit-

impulses themselves are not words, but what we might call "logical syllables."

Take the first, "But what then": it is precisely for our thinking purposes equivalent to a trisyllabic word la-la-la. And the second in like manner is la-la-la-la-la-la; and so on through the thought. And so with every English thought.

To understand this matter of attention-stress, we must therefore throw over our literary notions of words as the units of thought, and think of an idea as a progress of impulses which are not coincident with words. This thought that we have before us proceeds through the mind thus: First, three impulses, viz., la (*But*) la (*what*) la (*then*); then six impulses, viz., la (*is*) la (*the*) la (*mes-*) la (*sage*) la (*to*) la (*us*); then ten impulses, viz., la (*of*) la (*our*) la (*own*) la (*po-*) la (*et*) la (*and*) la (*search-*) la (*er*) la (*of*) la (*hearts*), with possibly a slight division between the fifth and sixth; and then "af-ter-fif-teen-hun-dred-years-of-Chris-tian-faith"; then "have-been-num-bered-ov-er-the-graves-of-men" with a slight division between *-bered* and *ov-*.

It might be noted here that while the grouping of the impulses we have given is normal for English thought, the intervals between the groups will vary somewhat in various English minds. One reader, for instance, might make the interval be-

tween the first group of three and the group of six that follows of very short duration; another might make it slightly longer.

Thinking, then, of our complete sentence as passing through the mind by such impulses, let us examine the various stresses of attention we give them.

Taking up the first group, and thinking of it in connection with what precedes, we give more attention to the second impulse (*what*) than to the first (*But*) or to the third (*then*), distributing our attention in the order of light stress, heavy stress, light stress. Why? Because, in the first place, we recognize the " but " as a slightly adversative connective introducing, not a new idea in contrast to the former thought, but a new application of the former thought. If " But " had a strongly adversative force, as it would have in " But, if we consider the matter carefully, we shall see that this is not true," it would receive more attention. In the second place we recognize " what " as the subject of an inquiry which the author has led us to make while he was talking about Homer. " How about our own poet Shakspere, and his message to us?" As the subject of such an inquiry, "what" receives a considerable degree of attention; and in the third place " then " is a concise way of saying " if we consider our own poetry in a relation to

culture similar to that of the poetry we have been speaking of, viz., Greek poetry." This notion has been anticipated in the "but," and therefore the "then" representing it gets little attention.

We thus get a proportion of stress which may be represented by " ' ". Here the stress is determined by the logical relations of the various parts of the idea to the complete idea.

In the next group, "is the message to us," "is," being a mere predication of existence, receives little or no stress; give it stress, and you change the idea entirely; "you have said that our own poet had a message for us; what is this message" (*i.e.* "tell us the message")? "The" is an unstressed impulse; it merely connotes a habitual tendency of the English mind slightly to particularize any general notion. "The[1]-message," therefore, is really one idea, "message of the sort we have been thinking of."

Now so far our stress has been applied to differentiate from one another the particular intended logical relations of the various parts of our idea; *i.e.*, first, a connective notion, slightly adversative because introducing a different application of our

[1] Originally the word is a demonstrative pronoun, but it has so lost its original demonstrative nature that it is now a mere sign of a sort of logical inflection by which general ideas are thrown into particular categories.

previous thinking; second, the notion of the subject of a question inquiring after the substance and nature of something to follow; third, a notion of reference of this subject to preceding categories of thinking; fourth, a predication-connective establishing relation between subject and what is to follow. We now come to the statement of the thing about whose substance and nature our question inquires, viz., "message"; this thing is represented in English by a group of two impulses, "mes-" and "sage"; it is further distinguished by a differentiation of the two impulses in respect to attention such that the first must receive much more attention than the second. Such a differentiation is necessary to the identity of the notion, and is quite independent of its relations to other notions; "mes-sage," with attention fixed on the last syllable, would be as much of an impairment of the notion's identity as would be a change in the character of the vowel sound of the first impulse from *e* to *a*, giving "massage."

Here we have stress obviously playing a new rôle. In the other cases we have seen it denoting particular relations between the various parts of our idea; now it is being used simply for the purpose of identifying the notion itself, for purely connotative purposes. This stress is fixed and deter-

mined, unalterable no matter what the relation of the "message"-notion to the other notions may be. But had our message-notion been a single impulse in which such a stress identification was not necessary, like "word" for instance, it would still have demanded some attention as being an important notion in the complex of notions which go to make up our idea, and would therefore have received some stress. It must be, therefore, that this stress, whatever its degree, is still attached to "message." Where is it? If we examine closely the group of impulses which connote the idea *message*, we shall see that the stress given to the word when put in relation to other notions always falls on its already stressed syllable. Suppose we wanted to say, "It is the poet's message, not his personality, that is of prime concern to us"; we could not then avoid fixing our chief attention on "message." But that attention would not fall on "-sage," but upon "mes-"; "-sage" gets no attention, no matter how important the idea of the whole group becomes. We thus see that the stress which indicates particular relations of parts of an idea to the whole, invariably falls upon that impulse of a group of impulses denoting a single idea that is already stressed to mark the identity of the group.

If we examine the other polysyllabic words of

this sentence, we shall see that the same is true of their stresses.

Going on with our examination, we see that "to" is unstressed, indicating the relation in which "us" stands to "message"; that "us" is slightly contrasted in the mind with "Greeks," — "Homer's message to the Greeks," — and in consequence receives some attention; that "of" is a relation word putting "our own poet" in a source relation to "the message," and gets no attention; that "our own poet" stands for Shakspere, — "our poet," in contradistinction to "the poet of the Greeks," — and so "our" is a distinguishing notion, and must receive considerable attention; that the particularizing force of "our" is made sharper by the addition of "own" (*i.e.* "a poet in whom we have a feeling of interest"), and "own," the second particular (as is always the case with two associated particularizing notions), gets slightly more attention than "our"; that "poet" (two impulses already possessing an identity-stress proportion ′ ˣ) gets some attention, but "poets" being already before our minds, the attention is not a marked one; had Ruskin been speaking of artists (Pheidias, for instance), and their message to their times, the case would have been different, and "poet," a new notion, would have received considerable attention; but being already familiar

to our thinking, "poet" gets a slight attention fixed on its already stressed first impulse.

Ruskin now stops to add a very peculiar association to the notion of Shakspere; he calls him "the searcher of hearts," bringing to our minds the Hebrew notion of "heart searching" as the means by which the individual becomes conscious of motive, character, etc. He virtually says that Shakspere reveals us to ourselves, and makes us know the springs of action and character which regulate our human conduct. It is, of course, an idea of deep significance, new, striking, and pregnant. It is intimately associated with religious emotions and feelings, — indeed an idea impossible to realize without emotion. Its significance is therefore not logical (the words might easily be left out without impairing one whit the clearness of Ruskin's idea), but emotional. It appeals to deep experiences of the human soul, and the appeal immediately claims the reader's attention.

We shall go more thoroughly into this matter later, but note now the presence of this new element of stress which we shall call "emotion-stress." Note, too, its effect on consciousness; the phrase to which it is attached cannot be passed over lightly; we cannot give it the sort of attention we should pay to "the Stratford bard" or "the English Homer," but we dwell on its words,

giving them time to sink into our consciousness.

It is not necessary to analyze the impulses of this phrase in respect to those of their stress-elements which indicate logical relations, for they are similar to those we have described already. But we may notice that the emotion-stress which we give its words does not disturb the logical or sense stresses which they already have.

In the next group, a time notion, we have a second appeal to our emotions. The "numbering of the years over the graves of men" suggests the passing of the years one by one, the flight of time, the death of the individual, the mortality of the race, the Christian faith and its great message to humanity, the Christian hope in relation to death — all of them notions of deep significance to Ruskin's readers. Change the expression to "after all these centuries" and the absence of emotion-stress is felt at once.

Gathering up the various stress-elements of this passage, we may classify them as follows: —

First, the stress we have in the first syllables of *message, poet, searcher, after, fifteen, hundred, numbered.* It is associated with one of the several sound groups or impulses which together connote the notions of "something-of-importance-told-to-some-one"; "a maker-of-what-we-call-poetry";

"this person conceived as one-who-looks-into-motives-of-human-conduct"; "a subsequent-time-relation with further connotations of consequence"; "the numeral which stands at the end of the first half of the second decade in our numerical notation, taken together with the numeral that stands at the end of the tenth decade to denote the sum of a series the last unit of which stands at the end of the first half of the second decade of a system in which the unit is a group of ten decades"—a very complex connotation; "the completed act of counting numerically, unit by unit, until the end of a series is reached"—used metaphorically here, of course, only for the sake of its association, to get before the mind a notion of a long series. Now each of these notions, or partial connotations of a notion as they really are, is identified in the thought not only by a definite group of sound-impulses, but by definite attention-stresses associated with these groups. We call this kind of attention Word-Stress. It is fixed and unalterable for the group of sound-impulses with which it is associated, and always appears in consciousness along with the sound-group with which it is associated. This word-stress, then, is a fixed stress, independent of the context, and helping to determine the identity of a given group of sound-impulses.

We have also in this passage what, at first sight, appears to be a second kind of stress, associated with the larger groups of sound-impulses when they are placed in certain general categorical relations: "The message," "to us," "of poet and searcher," "have been numbered." These connotations, however, when thus put into the categories of general relation such as are denoted by prefixing "the" or "of" or "have been," are still single notions, and the stress which accompanies them may be considered as stress belonging to words. The relation of these stressed impulses to one another is likewise more or less fixed for a given group; *e.g.* in "of the poet" the chief stress is always on the "po-" impulse of the group of sound-impulses which denote the poet in a source relation. Furthermore, in the phrase "of our own poet" (*i.e.* Shakspere) the notion is a single notion, — defined by "our" and "own," as well as put into a source category, but still a single notion, — and has a fixed stress-relation associated with its component elements.

All these forms of stress, therefore, we may bring under the one rubric "Word-Stress." And we may define word-stress as *that stress of attention which is definitely fixed in a certain proportion, and associated with the identification or definition of a single notion.*

In the second place we have in the passage what we have called sentence or sense stress. This has to do, not with the relations to one another of the various parts of a single notion, but with the relation of whole notions to other notions; and it is not fixed, but changes with the changing relation of the notions to one another. As we have already seen, "But what then" places the predication which follows in a certain definite relation of consequence to the predication which precedes. In "But what then, is the message of the poet to be disregarded?" the relation of the succeeding predication to the preceding is entirely different; the words are now an expression of surprise at the consequence which follows from the preceding predication.

Similarly, "is the message," as we have seen, conveys quite a different idea from that in "is the message." So "our own poet" puts Shakspere in sharp contrast with Homer, while "our own poet" sets him in the same category with Homer.

This sort of stress may be defined, then, as *a movable stress attaching to the various elements of a predication, and determining their logical relation to other elements of the same or of contiguous predications.*

In the third place, we have emotion-stress, which we have already defined as *a stress of attention due to the peculiar emotional interest which a notion may have in virtue of its relation to a recalled personal experience.*

This passage not only reveals these three different kinds of attention-stress, but shows also applications of them in various degrees of intensity. We have "But" with a light stress, "what" with a full stress, "then" with a lighter stress than "what" but heavier than that of "But," "is" and "the" with scarcely any stress, "mes-" with full stress again, "-sage" with little or none, "of our own" with a crescendo of stress; and so on through the sentence, in a varying current of relaxation and intensity, a diastole and systole following the course of the idea as it passes through the mind.

There is no way of measuring absolutely in all cases the precise degree of stress each impulse of a thought receives. Indeed, it is rather a question of relative proportion than of absolute degree. But in English there are certain well-defined effects produced by lack of stress which enable us to fix unstressed impulses with comparative accuracy;[1]

[1] The vowels and diphthongs of unstressed syllabic impulses tend to become a relaxed vocal utterance of a slightly palatal

there is a certain impulse in each group which receives more attention than any of the others, *e.g.*, "own" in "our own poet"; there are others which receive some attention, but not so much as this more important impulse, "our" and "po-" for instance. Each of these three degrees of stress-impulse has a fixed usage in poetry (a matter which we shall go into later on); so we can roughly classify stress-impulses as primary and secondary, and put the unstressed impulses by themselves.

We thus get three categories of stress distinction: —

Primary stress.

Secondary stress.

Lack of stress.

We have, then, in this short sentence of English thought, a tangled complex of attention-stresses, varying in degree, and due to various causes, but so inextricably associated with the normal progress of the idea through an English mind, that the idea is comparatively unintelligible without them, and wholly meaningless if their relative order is seriously disturbed.

And so it is with every English thought. And this stress material is the very warp of the poet's

character if originally palatal, and a relaxed vocal utterance of a slightly guttural character if originally guttural. The voiceless consonants of unstressed impulses tend to become voiced.

verse. It is the punctuating material which divides the thought-moments into varying rhythm figures of ever changing beauty and harmony, and a clear understanding of its nature is the first requisite to an accurate knowledge of English poetry.

CHAPTER XI

THE NATURE OF STRESS AND THE MANNER OF ITS INCIDENCE

BEFORE going on to consider the province of stress in English poetry, it will be worth our while to examine briefly into its nature, lest we fall into the various confusions which are involved in popular notions of the subject. These arise from confusing a physical phenomenon with the mental operation which causes it, and thinking of word-stress as "accent," and sense-stress as "emphasis." Such a confusion is precisely what one would fall into if, when he heard the click of a telegraph instrument, he should say to himself "that is electricity."

For this attention-stress is in its nature not physical, but mental, and may exist and operate in the mind's thinking without the utterance of a single word or the writing of a single letter.

We think not by means of sounds but by means of ideas of sounds; the two are very different things. We associate with a notion a certain definite group of speech-sounds. This association becomes firmly fixed in the mind and comes

to stand for the notion in question, so that when we want to use the notion in relation to our experience we form an idea of the sound-group, and the presence of this sound-group idea in our thought is as the presence of the thing itself, and conveys with it all the attendant notions usually associated with the thing itself.

Suppose, for instance, I wish to bring before my consciousness a mechanism of keys, levers, and types, which when used in a certain way will make upon paper definite marks which represent sound-ideas. I have seen one of these machines and I can easily reproduce in my mind a picture of its material and outward characteristics. I need only summon this picture before my consciousness to have the idea I want. I see it clearly, — keys, levers, ink-ribbon, types, and all. Now if I were going to invent some new kind of type-writer, perhaps this way of forming a notion of a type-writer which I intended to modify would be the best way to go about my work. I should seize upon some particular adjustment or adjustments of material which I desired to modify or change, and would begin my work of type-writer inventing in this way. This might be the quickest and most expedient for me.

But suppose I was not particularly concerned with type-writers *per se*, but merely wished to form

some idea of the uses to which the type-writer was put in modern life; some idea like "the type-writer has taken the place of the pen." I might still picture to myself a number of these type-writers in a number of offices, persons writing signs on paper or making sounds with the voice, operators striking the keys, printed paper coming from the roll, etc. Then I should think of persons holding pens, writing signs on paper with ink, etc. Then I could compare the respective numbers of my first set of pictures and my second set, and see that my first series was more numerous than my second, etc., and thus reach my conclusion. I could perhaps do this (if I were very careful) without using words. But the process would be very tedious, clumsy, and liable to error.

Now suppose I start in another way: I know that most people who have seen this machine think of it as a "printing-press that writes"; *i.e.*, it produces effects which one naturally associates with the printing-press by methods which are similar to those associated with pen writing; and that they therefore put together two groups of sounds — *t-ai-p* and *r-ai-t-ə-r* — each of which is definitely associated with these two processes, and give more attention to the first group than to the second. In other words, I have already in my mind an

idea of this triple group of sound-impulses standing for this machine. I have also in my mind, ready to come before my consciousness, an idea of the sounds *p-e-n* representing pen writing. I have also in my mind the image of a group of sounds associated with employment of something to a given end, viz., those sounds suggested to your mind when I write "is used"; also the image of a group of sounds — the sound suggested when I write "more than" — which denotes a proportion of activity, such that the activity notions preceding the "more than" are more numerous than those that follow it. All this machinery of expression lies in my mind ready at an instant's call in virtue of the fact that I am familiar with English speech.

Now instead of constructing my series of pictures, I may much more easily and quickly suggest to my consciousness the whole idea made up of these selected images of sound-groups. I need not translate them into sound, nor need I indicate them by the signs which represent them, though I can do this quickly and by a single initial effort of the will if I wish to. All that I do is to think of the sounds in their various normal positions, with their various normal stress-differentiations, and I have the idea.

I can do all my thinking in this way. In fact

most of us do thus think by means of ideas of variously differentiated sound-groups. We learn these ideas by ear, first hearing the sound-group in association with a notion, and then forming in our minds an image of the sound-group to represent the notion. But the image of the sound-group is not the sound-group itself any more than the type-writer picture is the type-writer itself. Sometimes the sound-group is a single impulse, what we call a vowel sound, with or without associated consonantal sounds; more often it is a group of such impulses, two or three or four or a dozen of them as the case may be. We think of them as letters forming words, and with a strange persistency imagine that we learn them out of spelling-book and dictionary, c-a-t "cat," d-o-g "dog" fashion. But these elements of thought are deep in consciousness and come forth in actual and efficient hourly use as counters of thought, long before we know what a spelling-book or dictionary is.

These images of sound-groups, however, are much more than mere imaged groups of vowels and consonants; their order, arrangement, and stress is as much a part of their idea-representing power as is the quality of their sounds. "Rait-ər-taip" does not represent the notion of a typewriter, nor does "type-writer used pen than more is"

represent the idea that the "type-writer is used more than the pen"; nor does "type-writer" with the stress upon the last of the three impulses represent a type-writer; nor does "the type-writer is used more than the pen" with sentence-stress upon "the," "is," and "than" represent the idea I have in mind.

Stress and arrangement, therefore, are essential elements necessary to the very formation of these idea-representing sound-groups in English.

So much for the sound-groups themselves.

Now there are in constant connection with these sound-impulses certain nerve-muscular activities which reproduce them. If I have "the-type-writer-is-used-more-than-the-pen" notion in my mind as a concatenated group of ideas of speech-impulses arranged and stressed in definite order and proportion, I may, by merely willing the translation of these images into their corresponding physical sounds, reproduce them vocally, group by group, as they come into my consciousness. I merely establish such a connection as I establish when I will to eat or to walk, between the ideas of speech-sounds and the physical organism for producing speech, and its muscles and nerves go on in the translation until I will them to stop.

Again, instead of translating these images of

sound-groups into actual groups of physical sounds corresponding to them, I may will a connection between my ideation and another set of physical activities, and produce upon paper a set of visual forms which will suggest to another mind these images of sound-groups in precisely the relation to one another which they have in my mind. In other words, I think by sound-groups, I talk by interpreting these sound-groups into corresponding physical speech-sounds, and I write by making marks upon paper which, being definitely associated with these sound-groups, will suggest them and their relations to one another to any mind which has learned to "read" writing or print.

In this twofold process of suggesting definite images of sound-groups to other minds, viz., by speaking and writing, it is only in the first that all the characteristics of the original sound-image are reproduced. And it is even possible to suggest the sound-groups to the ear without reproducing their stress relations, provided a new and conflicting set of stress relations is not imposed on them; in other words, I may take my "type-writer-is-used-more-than-the-pen" notion, and put it in another person's consciousness by merely reproducing in their proper arrangement the sounds which make it up; the suggestion of only the sounds and their arrangement will reproduce on the hearing mind the

complete image of the sound-groups with all their associates. Children learn to read in this way: "á dóg and á cát are in our yárd" will suggest to the hearing mind the complete series of sound-images with all their stress associates. But this is not the way the child speaks under normal conditions. In "á-dóg-and-á-cát," etc., the idea of the cat and dog is not in his consciousness; his whole attention is absorbed in an effort to replace certain associates between sounds and letters that are as yet but imperfectly fixed in his mind, and there is but little room for a realization of cats and dogs. But as soon as his spelling ordeal is over, he will tell you with perfect naturalness that there is a cat and a dog in his yard, if he thinks it worth his while.

Thus, though it would be quite possible in the representation to the mind of oral sound-impulses to get along without reproducing their actual stress relations, the speech-producing organism under normal conditions will reproduce the proper attention-stresses of the various parts of the sound-group images with perfect ease and fluency. All physical actions in which attention and interest are involved take place with greater muscular and nervous energy than do others in which attention is not involved. And it is but natural that in reproducing a sound-group image, those parts of

it on which attention is fixed will be reproduced with more energy than the parts which do not attract attention; this increment of energy interprets itself in a more energetic action of the speech-producing muscles. Indeed it is a common law of English speech that when a sound-impulse for any reason loses its attention-stress, some or all of its component sounds go into neighbouring categories requiring less energy to make, nay, are sometimes lost altogether.

Now these physical concomitants of word and sentence-stress which appear when sound-images are reproduced orally are what we know as "accent" and "emphasis," — "accent" denoting the effect of an increase of muscular energy when syllables are uttered, "emphasis" denoting the effect of the muscular increment when words are uttered. But "accent" and "emphasis" are not word-stress and sentence-stress any more than the buzzing of the armature of a dynamo is electric energy. Even though I can, by controlling the force of the current which goes into the dynamo, alter the character of its buzzing, making it now loud and now soft, now low pitched and now high pitched, I dare not, therefore, assume that the buzzing is the current itself. I should never come to understand electrical energy with such an assumption in my mind. And the

same is true of the relation between attention-stress and accent or emphasis; the one is a mere physical accident of the other, useful, perhaps, as a rough measure of its intensity, but by no means to be confused with it when we come to study poetry.

So much, then, for the physical concomitants of word and sentence stress.

The question naturally arises, What is the corresponding concomitant of emotion-stress? We shall look in vain for a physical concomitant in the direction of intensity in energy of utterance. Take our phrase "searcher of hearts"; we make it grotesque if we give it emphasis. Such a process applied to the words by one who utters them aloud makes us feel that the speaker is trying to impose upon us. Attention it undoubtedly receives, and a great deal of attention, but the attention-stress is not expressed in energy of utterance. Children who learn poetry, the emotional interest of which is far beyond the compass of their experience, and endeavour to recite it, often recognize, in a vague way, a difference between these emotionally stressed passages and other passages in the context, and go so far as to attempt to render emotion-stress in terms of emphasis, but always with unhappy effect. They hear their elders reciting poetry, and mistaking emo-

tion-stress for sentence-stress, they naturally interpret one in terms of the other, and a jerky emphasis series is the result. Children will produce music in precisely the same way, interpreting artificially as accent-stress impulses that should be interpreted in terms of emotion. The result is an execution that may be "brilliant," but is lacking in "depth," to use the somewhat vague terms of musical criticism.

Emotion-stress depends, not on the quantity, but on the quality of the attention energy. Perhaps we can illustrate this better by a comparison of two phrases in which the same stress impulse occurs but under different associational conditions: take Lear's words (*Lear*, III. 2. 1):—

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks, rage, blow."

In the description of the storm the word "blow" carries with it the association of a violent gust of wind, and this association modifies the attention impulse in such a way that the last element of its diphthong is protracted in obedience to the sound association. One can easily appreciate this by substituting the German translation for Shakspere's English:—

"Blast! Winde, sprengt die Backen, Wüthet! Blast!"

where the sense is the same and the order of word and sentence stresses almost identical; but the

emotional stresses do not lend themselves so easily to the sound associations involved in the thought.

Now compare "blow" in

"Blow, bugle, blow"

where the association is not the protracted rush of the wind, but the round, clear notes of a bugle. Here it is the first element of the diphthong that receives most attention, and the stress falls upon the middle of the wave, not upon its end. The waves which the word "blow" represents in these two passages are therefore quite different, one of them being a long, rising rush of energy cumulating at the end, the other a rounded impulse cumulating in the middle.

Take another illustration from the same passage in *Lear* (III. 2. 4–6).

"You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head!"

Here the poet might just as easily have said "strike my white head," for that is what he means, and lightning "strikes" rather than "singes"; "strike my white head," too, as adequately fulfils the rhythm conditions of the verse as "singe my white head." But the horror of "singe," with its sound and odour associates, and its Elizabethan connotation of "insult," makes us

pause as we should not do if "smite" or "strike" or "burn" had been used.

But it is not always such a slowing of the wave-impulse or such a protraction of its attention energy that emotion-stress produces. Compare, for instance, such a verse as

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,"

where the last waves of the verse are, as it were, a "linked sweetness long drawn out," with a time notion in which there is a strong association with the ticking of a clock,

"When I do count the clock that tells the time."

Here the unusually short vocal impulses and the sharp explosives *k* and *t* easily lend themselves to a staccato rhythm which echoes the clock-ticks,

"tu-tic-tu-tic-tu-tic-tu-tic."

This suggestion quite alters the normal character of the attention-stresses, sharpening each rhythm-wave and making the counting notion quite a different one from that in

"And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan."

No English mind would think of applying the rhythm of "from woe to woe tell o'er" to "the clock that tells the time," or of applying the staccato rhythm of the latter to the former

notion, though both of them connote the same general idea of counting successive units in a continuous series.

These are not illustrations of what are commonly called onomatopoetic rhythms, for there is no sound association in

> "And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er."

Nor is there in the last verse of

> "But yet I call you servile ministers
> That have with two pernicious daughters joined
> Your high engendred battles 'gainst a head
> So old and white as this."

And thousands of similar verses might be cited from Shakspere. And where there is a palpable sound-imitation it is not a question of the sound echoing the sense, but of emotional associates affecting the character of notion-representing sound-groups; just as in the case of emphasis and accent the actual oral imitation is but the physical effect of the ideation. In

> "heavily from woe to woe tell o'er"

there is just as significant an emotion-stress as in

> "count the clock that tells the time,"

yet the former expression is not at all onomatopoetic in the sense in which the latter is onomatopoetic; there is no possible way of imitating "woes" in speech, for "woes" is an abstraction.

How, then, shall we describe the physical concomitants of emotion-stress? We can only do so by calling attention to two elements in its vocal effect, the first a contraction or a prolongation of the time of a syllable impulse, and the second an effect which in phonetics is called "tone"; sometimes only the former of these two kinds of speech phenomena is conspicuously present, sometimes only the latter, sometimes both.

For instance, the negative *no*, expressing a firm and deliberate denial, is a long, even impulse of sound; a positive and hasty denial is the same word, with a short, even impulse, but does not essentially differ in tone from the former. If the denial is deliberate yet not firm, and the matter open to further question, *no* has a rising tone with protracted stress; if, however, the denial is a mere form of inquiry put negatively, and equivalent to "you don't think otherwise, do you"? it has contracted stress and rising tone; and so with the falling tone series denoting positive conviction that will not listen to argument.

The tone concomitant, however, is not an essential element of the rhythm of speech, for it is applied regardless of stress, and is independent of the time or intensity of speech-impulses.

So much, then, for the physical concomitants of stress. Let us examine for a moment the man-

ner of its incidence upon the various impulses to which it is attached.

As thought passes through the mind, it is obvious that the several impulses which express the thought are, for the most part, incomplete when taken by themselves — "of the," for example, is meaningless by itself; "mess-" likewise represents of itself no complete notion. Even to the mind which is using the images of these sound-impulses to bring its thought into the field of consciousness the discrete impulse is usually of no representative significance. Take the last word of the preceding sentence; its initial impulse "sig-" represents nothing at all; "signif-" is likewise powerless to suggest any connotation; "signifi-" is still empty of suggestiveness. It is not until the series is complete that any notion is derivable from it. The like is true, though to a less degree, of the larger groups of ideation in the phrase or sentence. In the rough and ready method of definition by metaphor which language resorts to in lieu of definition by limitation, we clearly recognize this fact. We think of a "current" of thought, or a "train" of ideas, and "fluency" of thought; our thinking is "interrupted"; a foreigner speaks "broken" English. The formulation of thought by sound-group images thus being a continuous and not an immediate

process, an idea may easily be conceived as a succession of impulses, and the mental attention which accompanies the succession as a current of mental energy ever moving on a little in advance of the thought itself, selecting the sound-group images, and getting them ready to fall into their proper places. That this marshalling of thought-impulses does actually take place in our thinking, is clearly shown by the common confusion between the sound elements of a not yet concatenated sound-group and those which are already fully in the consciousness of the thinker. Success in extempore writing or speaking very largely depends upon the ability to marshal one's thought a little in advance of its actual formulation without thereby distracting too much attention from the sound-group images actually in process of expression; the speaker or writer, while engaged with the formulation of one group of notions, is at the same time getting the material of the following group ready for formulation. In the case of the public speaker this division of mental effort is sometimes almost unconscious, at other times it is painfully obvious. And often his anxiety about the thought which is to come so overpowers him in the midst of his utterance, that he stops in the middle of a phrase or of a word, the finishing out of which is a mere mechanical process. But in

all thought-formulation, consciously or unconsciously, at least a part of the mind's attention is occupied with what is to follow. Like the effort of walking, which is really an effort to keep from falling, the effort of formal thinking is an endeavour to keep the ideation from falling before the next point of stable equilibrium is reached.

We may therefore think of attention effort as a progressive energy always making toward a normal pause in the course of the thought-formulation. Now this current meets with obstacles in its path; wherever there is a stress of attention given to a particular word or syllable in the onward succession of the sound-group images, there is necessarily a resistance to the onward flow, and this resistance, acting upon the onward-moving current, produces a wave in its course. We shall not be far wrong, therefore, if we think of the rhythm of an English thought under the form of successive waves of attention energy, and of the unit of English poetry, when we come to study its form and nature, as a rhythm-wave.

We can easily illustrate for ourselves this wave character of attention energy by interpreting it into terms of sound. If one takes an ordinary thought and pronounces it to himself merely as a group of vocal impulses, not thinking of the significance of the impulses themselves, but treating

them merely as successive sounds, and gives the stressed impulses an exaggerated emphasis, the effect will be a staccato utterance exceedingly unpleasant to an English ear. But if we think of the impulses as impulses of thought, not of sound, and then give those which are stressed an exaggerated emphasis, the effect will be that continuous wavelike movement of sound which is the normal concomitant of English speech.

This "rhythm," as we call it, is present in every English thought, complex and irregular, a dozen different series all blended together, but always flowing along with the ideation of an English mind.

Any one who has watched the ocean waves, as they seem to move along the side of a vessel, will observe that between the larger swells there are always irregular series of smaller waves, and between these smaller waves irregular series of wavelets and ripples playing over the surface of the wave itself. It is just so in the rhythm of an English thought; the heavy impulses of sense or emotion stress are separated from one another by intervals, in which are various minor rhythm-series of sense-stress, and between these in turn are various series of word-stress waves. And the skilful writer of prose knows well how to make these series play into one another to serve the full purpose of his thought.

This tendency to wavelike series of stress is so dominant in English thought, that the normal English mind is constantly distributing artificial stress-impulses throughout the various groups, that they may be more rhythmic in character. It is a general law of English speech that if one impulse of a group catches a full stress, the impulse which follows next but one will receive a secondary stress.

In poetry the constant tendency to rhythmic distribution of stresses is so strong that often the reader will sacrifice to some extent the natural rhythm of the thought in order to secure the regular rhythm-series which the poet is using; *e.g.*, in such a verse as

> "Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of Death"

the first six impulses would have equal sense-stress and equal emotion-stress in prose thinking. But Milton has so impressed on the mind a recurrent rhythm-series of simple rising waves that we unconsciously give "Caves," "Fens," "Dens," slightly more attention than we give "Rocks," "Lakes," "Bogs," and thus make a non-rhythmic series rhythmic. Had Milton been writing in falling rhythm the incidence of stresses would have been quite different, and "Rocks," "Lakes,"

"Bogs," ("and" would, of course, be omitted) would have received more attention than "Caves," "Fens," "Dens."

Our conclusion, then, is this: *those accesses of impulse which we call "accent" and "emphasis" are but vocal reflections of a mental energy of attention which differentiates the various impulses of a series of sound-group images into varying rhythm-series; that this attention energy is part of the thought itself, and intimately associated with the identity, and the logical and emotional relations of its component notions; that these accesses of attention fall into rhythm-series which can be fittingly represented as waves of energy; and that these waves of energy tend in English thought to arrange themselves in more or less regular series.*

CHAPTER XII

METHOD OF DETERMINING STRESS RELATIONS, AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES DETERMINING NORMAL INCIDENCE OF STRESSES

A CLEAR appreciation of English stress relations is possible to any one who habitually thinks in English idiom; he has only to set the observing powers of his mind to watch the course of his own ideation. For of habit he applies these attention-stresses in their proper places and in their proper degrees of intensity; this he learns to do when he learns his language. And learning to think by sound-group images is the same sort of a process as learning to walk. A complex group of coördinations, at first effortful and voluntary, by practice and habit become effortless and involuntary. Once learned, they are never forgotten until the mind ceases to perform its natural functions. All one's conscious experience thus involuntarily interprets itself into certain related images of groups of sounds which he has learned to associate with his experience.

We have already seen that the stress intensities of these sound-group images are an element of

their identity, their mutual relation, and their significance in the thinker's experience. As one thinks, therefore, these stress relations distribute themselves in consciousness without any voluntary act; one does not have to stop and decide where he is to place each stress impulse, and how much intensity he is to give to it, any more than one needs to stop and think how he will put his foot down for his next step. All that takes care of itself. Without any education in "spelling," "pronunciation," "syllabification," etc., he can, in his own thinking, distribute these accesses of attention with unerring accuracy of position, and deftly shaded precision of intensity.

And if one can think what one means, and say what one thinks, differentiating with ease and fluency of stress distribution the particular intended shade of meaning from the multitudinous meanings possible to the words, and do this without rule or prescription, he has at hand the machinery for interpreting into its proper stress distinctions the thought of another mind without the help of accent marks or other forms of stress notation. For if he makes the foreign thought his own by putting himself in the position of the other person, and thus thinks the foreign thought as if it were his own, the machinery which interprets his own thought into terms of stress distinctions

will interpret the foreign thought in the same way.

To illustrate; I see these words in Othello: —

"My lord is not my lord."

As they stand they are meaningless, a proposition A is not-A, violating a fundamental axiom of logic. And I cannot obtain any sense from this perfectly constructed sentence of simple, correctly used English words until I assume a certain definite relation between the speaker, Desdemona, and the person referred to, Othello, that has been brought about by certain definite antecedent conditions. I then imagine what my emotion would be under these conditions if I were Desdemona, and with this emotion in mind, I think the thought into the terms "The man you now know and the world knows as 'Othello' is quite a different person from the Othello whom I have known as my husband. His relation to you and to the rest of the world seems to be the same as it has been; but something has happened to change his relation to me his wife." And this entire thought-complex is represented in terms of a peculiar attention-stress sequence applied to these words: —

"My lord is not my lord."

Here the first "my lord" is a mere formal term by which one designates a notable person, such a designation as Iago or Cassio would use to describe Othello, with a very slight identity stress on "my" that makes the pronoun really one of the third person (for the phrase is equivalent to "his lordship"), and a more marked identity stress on "lord," which connotes a more or less impersonal relation. The second "my lord" has quite a different attention-stress; for the "my" here connotes an intimate personal relationship to the speaker, in which the pronoun has its full first person categorical connotation, and "lord" connotes now the notion of "husband."

These stress relations are the only elements of the thought-formulation which make it intelligible, and any English mind possessing a realization of the emotional setting of the thought will unconsciously give the thought its proper attention-stresses.

Further on in *Othello* (V. 2. 98 ff.), we have again this play of emotional stress; and here its significance is even more strikingly exhibited. Emilia says to Desdemona: —

> "Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?"

Desdemona can only interpret "my lord" in terms of her overwrought emotion, and failing to under-

stand why Emilia should call Othello "her lord," asks with some surprise, "With who?"

> "Why with my lord, madam."
> "Who is thy lord?"
> "He that is yours, sweet lady."
> "I have none."

The dialogue is meaningless as it stands, and it is only through the reader's sympathy with Desdemona's mental state, the attitude of a mind whose perceptive powers are so numbed by suffering and so dazed by hopeless, unintelligible confusions that it can only lay hold of truth through emotion, and can only grasp "my lord" in terms of "my husband" — it is only through a sympathy which can assume Desdemona's mental attitude that the colloquy becomes intelligible. But when understood in this way it is more eloquent than reams of "psychological" or "philological" discussion.

Our illustrations have perhaps fallen foul of some unusually subtle stress distinctions; but we do not realize how common and constant an element of English thinking such fine distinctions are. The point we are here endeavouring to make clear is that we apprehend these stress-determined relations among the various parts of a complex idea only by making the thought's emotional environment, as we may call it, for the nonce our own. And with this means of discovering the emotional

and logical stress relations of the parts of a thought, combined with the unconscious knowledge he has of the identity stresses which determine the general categories of meaning for words and phrases, the English-thinking person is ready to apprehend the æsthetic punctuating forms of English verse. Indeed, the verse will unconsciously punctuate itself as its thought passes through his mind.

Mistakes through which he alters the poet's rhythm, he undoubtedly does make; misapprehensions by which he fails to catch the fine rhythm through failing to catch the subtlety of the thought, he certainly from time to time falls into. But despite these, he can and does understand and appreciate the æsthetic forms of English poetry without academic training and formal knowledge.

But whether this method of applying stress-differentiations be entirely satisfactory or no, it is, for the present, the only one possible. For as yet we have no adequate scientific treatment of the subject from which to derive an accurate knowledge of its laws and their applications. It is a field which properly belongs to English grammar. But English grammar as a science, and not as a mere dry formulation of Renaissance notions about speech and language, is yet almost a *terra incognita*. Few students have even risen

to a comprehension of the meaning of the simple fact that speech phenomena are the result of development, only to be clearly understood in the light of a knowledge of the conditions which produce them. The work that has been done has been usually along the lines of Sounds and Inflections, with some incomplete study of Syntax. Stress has hardly been recognized as having anything to do with grammar outside of Germany, and unfortunately the foreign student rarely attains an accurate sense for English stress, and is therefore at a great disadvantage in dealing with the subject.

But despite the lack of such a scientific and historical treatment of this subject of English stress, certain general principles affecting its incidence may be definitely stated. These are not without exceptions and qualifications, and only describe normal stress relations; but nevertheless, they will serve as a rough guide to the student in determining the rhythm-series of English verse.

As to primary stress; it falls :—

1. Upon the so-called "accented" syllables of polysyllabic words as given in English dictionaries.

2. Upon the "accented" syllable of the first element of noun or adjective compounds; *e.g.*,

black-mail, side-board, table-cover, rosy-fingered, morocco-bound book, three-volume novel, etc.

3. Upon the "accented" syllable of the second element of compound verbs; *e.g.*, *unfold, undertake* (cf. "undertaker"), *uprear;* but there is a constant interplay of analogy between compound verbs and compound nouns, which does much to alter the normal stress conditions of both.

4. In nominal (or pronominal) notions to which are attached form-words denoting categories, the nominal notion normally receives full stress; *e.g.*,

"Like to the lark at break of day arising."

5. In verbal notions to which are attached form-words denoting categories of time and condition, the verbal notion normally receives full stress; *e.g.*,

"When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd."

6. In nominal notions made up of a general notion and a defining notion, the nominal notion receives full stress if the defining notion limits the general notion to a special category; *e.g.*, *Poor soul, sinful earth, rebel powers.* If, however, the category is made especially significant by contrast or

comparison, the category word receives the full stress; *e.g.*, *terms divine*, *outward walls* (as contrasted with "within"). If two of these defining notions succeed one another, the first receives the full stress: —

"The warm white apple of her throat."
"Ah! good sweet Nightingale!"

7. In verbal notions qualified in such a way that the action of the verb is thought of as taking place in a certain manner, time, etc., the qualifying word normally takes the chief stress:

"shall worms
Eat up thy charge."

8. In adjective notions where the adjective is defined by a preceding adverb, the adverb normally takes a full stress; *e.g.*, *a well shaped head.* If the adverb is merely a categorizing element, as in *more bright*, *very long*, *so large*, the adjective receives the full stress. In the adverb + adverb group the second receives full stress; *e'en so*, *all alone.*

9. Primary stress falls upon the distinguished notion where one of a group of notions receives especial attention on account of novelty, contrast,

peculiar defining character, or peculiar logical significance in the context. It falls also upon the connective notion where this qualifies the whole succeeding context with which it is associated.

10. Primary stress falls upon the significant notion when some peculiar experience is suggested by an association or group of associations temporarily joined to the words expressing a general notion.

These principles regulating the incidence of primary stress are mere rough statements of normal conditions, and many of them are subject to the interferences of sentence-stress or emotion-stress. For when the stressed impulse is next to a secondary stressed impulse, if the latter is for any reason exaggerated the primary stressed impulse becomes secondary. If, for instance, I think of "a good man" as belonging to a class, the stress conditions are normally *a good man;* but if I distinguish the "goodness" in any way (and it happens that "goodness" is rarely predicated of "man" unless as a particularizing attribute), it becomes *a good man.*

The low-stressed or slightly stressed impulses of a thought-formulation are more fixed in character. They are, generally speaking:—

1. The so-called "unaccented" syllables of polysyllabic words. The rhythm-stress principle of English usually causes a secondary or intermediate stress upon the impulse next but one to the stressed impulse of a word. So one may say as a general rule that the syllable next to a stressed syllable (except in compound words) is unstressed. The lack of stress in English tends to produce a uniform quality for all vowels in these unstressed syllables, reducing them to a sound phoneticians denote by *ə*.[1] And the presence of this sound in a word is usually an evidence of lack of stress on the impulse in which it occurs.[2]

2. General and habitually used categorizing words like prepositions, articles, auxiliaries of mood and tense are usually unstressed. If dissyllabic, there is a slight secondary stress upon the identity-stressed syllable.

It is medially or secondarily stressed impulses

[1] This really represents two sounds, viz., a slightly palatal, but very lax vocal utterance, as in the second syllable of "musical"; and a slightly guttural, but very lax vocal utterance, as in the second syllable of "preposition." The distinction is clearly made in the unstressed elements of the English diphthongs ē^{ə} and ō^{ə}; *e.g.*, "make," "know."

[2] A similar, but not quite identical sound is heard in most stressed syllables which contain "short *u*"; *e.g.*, "but," "cut," "destructive," etc.

that are most difficult to fix, and it is just these impulses that are most significant for poetic form, because a secondarily stressed impulse can make either the low wave or the high wave of a group of rhythm-waves. Roughly stated, the incidence of these secondary stresses is as follows: —

1. The syllable next but one to the stressed syllable of a polysyllabic word receives secondary stress, likewise the syllable next but one to this secondary stressed syllable will receive a slight secondary stress; *e.g.*, *comparative*, *incompatibility*. Many initial syllables immediately preceding the stressed syllable of polysyllabic words have this secondary stress, *impossible*, *intense*, *destructive*. This rhythm distribution of secondary stresses makes possible such verses of poetry as —

"Of all this unintelligible world."

"Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move."

"Irreconcilable to our grand Foe."

2. In compound words, where the two parts are felt to be two different words, a secondary stress falls upon the element not primarily stressed; *e.g.*, *warlike*, *upreared*, *outstrip*, etc.

3. A secondary stress normally falls upon the adjective in the adjective + noun group. A sec-

ondary stress likewise normally falls upon the verb in the verb + adverb group; *e.g.*, *poor soul*, *eat up*.

4. A secondary stress falls upon notions and connectives of some logical, but not of paramount logical, significance for the sense of the thought-formulation.

5. Likewise notions of some emotional significance, but not of paramount emotional significance, often receive secondary stress; *e.g.*,

"But yet I call you servile ministers"

('for though you are not enemies, yet you affect me as such').

6. Impulses which, though normally unstressed, receive considerable attention from being part of an emotion-stressed passage, take a slight secondary stress; *e.g.*, in

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought"

"of" receives such an increment of emotion-stress.

7. Impulses normally unstressed, but receiving rhythm-stress when following unstressed impulses, have slight secondary stress; *e.g.*,

"How heavy do I journey on the way."

"Speak of the spring and foison of the year."

These, then, are some of the normal stress relations of English ideation. As we have said before, they are continually qualified by the interplay of emotion and sense stress. But this interplay of the various kinds of stress is never conflicting or confusing. For *sentence-stress and emotion-stress always fall upon impulses which already have identity stress*, or word-stress as we have called it. One can easily see why this should be so. For if a judgment of identity depends upon a differentiation of one out of a group of impulses, the determination of the identity-stressed group as a larger unit in the ideation will naturally be associated with the identity-giving impulse of the group and not with the others. Because the increment of sentence-stress, if it is added to some other member of the group of impulses, will, by thus diminishing the net value of the identity stress, lessen the sharpness of the notion. If I take the word "diminish," with identity stress on its second impulse and set it in a thought-complex like

"It will diminish not increase the clearness of the ideation,"

but, instead of adding this sense-stress increment to *min*, add it to *di*, making the word dái-mín-ish, the mind has such difficulty in identifying the *diminish* notion, that the purpose of the sentence-

stress increment is defeated. In other words, the attention directed toward the notion in order to contrast it with "increase" is wasted in hunting up the notion itself.

Likewise, no impulse that has not already sense-stress could have emotion-stress attached to it. For no notion that was not logically significant to the sense of the thought could, under normal conditions, be emotionally significant for the experience of the thinker. Moreover, from its very nature, emotion-stress must necessarily be thus augmentative to sentence-stress; for it is a fundamental principle of sentence-stress that the new and particular notion receives more stress than the familiar and general; and emotion-stress always particularizes.

There is thus no conflict in the incidence of the various sorts of stress, but they all harmoniously blend together in an ever-varying rhythm which gives colour and interest to the simplest forms of predication.

In Chapter IX. we showed that the punctuating system of English poetry did not depend either on quantity or upon what is commonly called "accent." The answer which we give to the question "What does it depend upon?" is "Attention-Stress," as we have endeavoured in these few chapters to define and analyze it.

If, then, this attention-stress is the material by which the English poet punctuates into æsthetic form the thought-moments of his verse, *the verse form of English poetry is not an extraneous æsthetic element superimposed upon it, but a vital, inherent æsthetic arrangement of the very thought itself.*

And if we show that English verse form imposes upon the ordinary formless groupings of English thought-impulses a definite arrangement which serves not only to punctuate the moments of the thought into clearly defined sequences, as does that of Old English or Hebrew poetry, and to add in so doing an element of formal æsthetic beauty to the thought-formulation, as does Latin and Greek poetry; but in addition to performing both these functions reinforces all those poetic interests which we sought to gather together in Chapter VI., by adding to them associations which are intimately related to the original experiences out of which the thought itself first grew into form: if we can show this, we shall surely be able to claim for our English poetic form, when rightly used, an efficiency and beauty unmatched by that of any language, ancient or modern.

We shall endeavour in succeeding chapters to make this claim good by showing that the peculiar pleasure of English poetry consists, not in a rhythmical arrangement of accents and emphases,

but in a rhythmical arrangement of attention-stresses which produce accent and emphasis; that the forms of sound-groups, as Aristotle would call them, or the ideas of the sound-groups, as Plato would say, have in themselves the elements which make up rhythm, and there needs no spoken nor whispered utterance to bring to the mind a consciousness of this rhythm by the actual recurrence of accents and emphases; that the rhythm of English verse is wrought into the very fabric of the thought itself, and made an inherent integral part of it; that the poet when he makes his verse does not take a given series of notions and clothe them one by one with rhythmic speech-sounds in regular successions, but forces his ideas themselves to flow in rhythmic series, whose waves are the waves of his thought rising and falling with the intensity of his ideation.

But we may anticipate our conclusion and say that English poetry is not a rhythm of sound but a rhythm of ideas, and the flow of attention-stresses which determines its beauty is inseparably connected with the thought; for each of them is a judgment of identity or a judgment of relation, or an expression of emotion, and not a thing of mere empty sound. The rhythm must thus be inevitable, or it is meaningless. It is the supreme excellence of Shakspere's poetry that he knows

this so well. His pulsing rhythms vibrate with the quick energy of his thought till they fairly tingle with emotion. Take almost any passage — Hamlet's soliloquy, Lear's outburst of passion during the storm, Macbeth's defiant challenge to the impending ruin he has brought on himself— there is not a word whose impulse is not definite and certain. The rhythm moves with clearness and sureness; it is not a question of poetry or of prose, but of the fullest, clearest, most adequate expression human thought is capable of. The reader does not realize that he is reading poetry — he is too intent on reading the souls of men. The poet's idea forges its own rhythm, and with it batters its way through the gates of speech to the inmost core of human experience. And so it is with all our great English poetry.

He who would think of it as a pleasing arrangement of vocal sounds has missed all chance of ever understanding its meaning. There awaits him only the barren generalities of a foreign prosody, tedious, pedantic, fruitless. And he will flounder ceaselessly amid the scattered timbers of its iambuses, spondees, dactyls, tribrachs, never reaching the firm ground of truth.

CHAPTER XIII

DETERMINING ELEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RHYTHM-WAVES

We have stated that the thought concomitant which our English poetry uses as material for punctuating its verse form is attention-stress. And in discussing the nature of this attention-stress, we have tried to make it clear that this stress is not a mere accidental characteristic of English speech-sounds, but an integral element of English thought, calling attention to its functions in the identification of sound-group images, in the coördination of these sound-represented notions into intelligible ideas, and in the determination of the relation of these notions to the thinker's experience.

It follows that English verse punctuation cannot exist independently of English thought. But yet, for purposes of analysis, we can think of the stress relations of the thought and the thought itself as two separate entities. And we can imagine a current of stress energy running along with an English thought in a certain definite series of impulses, and punctuating its moments into certain definite sequences. And we can think, too,

of these rhythm-sequences as being made up of successive waves of impulse; for, as we have already pointed out, these stress-impulses affect sound-groups in the form of waves. And moreover, we can consider groups of these waves as possessing a definite character or configuration.

For instance, in

"Like to the lark at break of day arising"

the waves all rapidly traverse the wide intervals between the low impulses and the high ones, while in

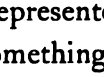
"And Death once dead, there's no more dying then"

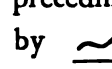
the amplitude of the intervals between "once dead" and "no more" is so light as to be scarcely perceptible, and the waves so slowly traverse these intervals as to make the verse in which they stand considerably longer than the former one.

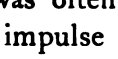
We shall see later that this variation of the stress-waves is one of the subtlest means which the poet has at his service to affect our emotions. But we need now only recognize and record their existence. Any passage of good English poetry would suit our purpose to observe the various characteristics of these stress-waves — say Milton's *Paradise Lost*, I. vv. 531 ff.; a passage which is surely of the very best as far as its verse form

is concerned. It is the muster of the fallen angels that the poet is describing: —

> "Then strait commands that at the warlike sound
> Of trumpets loud and clarions be uprear'd
> His mighty standard; that proud honour claim'd
> Azazel as his right, a cherube tall:
> Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd
> Th' Imperial Ensign, which full high advanc't
> Shon like a meteor streaming to the wind
> With gemms and golden lustre rich imblaz'd,
> Seraphic arms and trophies: all the while
> Sonorous mettal blowing martial sounds:
> At which the universal host upsent
> A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
> Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night."

Then, a temporal connective notion, rather rapidly passed over but still stressed, is followed by an adverb notion expressing the quickness of a sharply given order and denoted by a sound-impulse which, though containing a long vowel, is so quickened by the association contained in it as to be really a short impulse. (We have precisely the same sound in "make his paths *straight*," but here the impulse is quite different in time-length from the other.) More attention, too, falls on *strait* than on *then* because the "then" is rather connective than decisively temporal in its significance; graphically represented, therefore, the wave-group would be something like ;

that is, the first impulse begins rather high, continues for a brief interval, and rises into the second impulse, which is short and sharp. The stress principles determining the group are sentence-stress for *then* and phrase-stress (adverb relation) for *strait* somewhat sharpened by the word's association. *Commands* (such omissions of the subject — it is here "Satan" — are not uncommon in Middle English and early New English, and Milton, probably from his familiarity with Latin syntax, is especially fond of the idiom) presents a group of two impulses, the first of which is unstressed, the second stressed; and the stress of the second impulse will be increased by an emotion-stress if the notion of power recovered after a mood of helpless despair is prominent in the mind; the unstressed syllable is short (the double *m* is really single) and the stressed syllable is of moderate length. Our wave-group here is, therefore, slightly different from the preceding, and may be represented graphically by . *That* and *at* are both comparatively unimportant articulation words, but a slight rhythm-stress falls upon *at;* had *that* been an unmistakably stressed impulse, *at*, followed by an unstressed impulse as here, would have been as unmistakably unstressed, as in "Up they spring at a word." Both the words are impulses containing short

vocalic elements closing with explosives, so this wave-group is . In *the war-* we have an unstressed impulse (so short in early New English that it was often a mere enclitic) followed by a stressed impulse (word-stress) which is quantitatively long; the wave may be represented graphically by . The next wave-group is made by *-like sound:* its first impulse *-like,* the second syllable of a compound adjective which still retains an independent significance, catches considerable word-stress, but not so much as the first syllable; it is quantitatively long; *sound* represents an important notion for the context and is of course stressed; it contains, too, a long diphthong followed by a somewhat sonorous group of consonants; so we may represent the wave-pair as . Our whole series is thus a sequence of five varying waves of rhythm, scarcely any two of which have the same configuration.

Various minds might somewhat differently interpret these stresses, but no English mind whose sense for English rhythm was at all delicate could substantially change the stress relations here indicated without impairing the clearness of Milton's idea. And no English-thinking person could consider all these waves of impulse as similar feet composed of similar units,

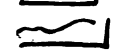
unless he was warping evidence to suit prosodic theory.

And this variation we find all through the passage. Some of the characteristic rhythm-waves are: —

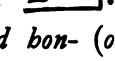
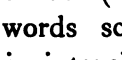
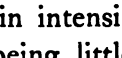
of trum-  (The last part of this wave was fuller in Milton's time, when "trumpet" was a word that we should spell "troompet.")

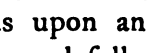
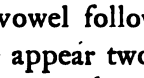
-pets loud 

and clar- 

-iouns be  (The first impulse is single, but has a double effect.)

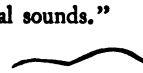
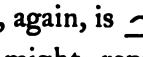
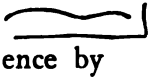
up rear'd .

In *proud bon-* (*our*)  we have two successive words scarcely differentiated from one another in intensity, the stress of a defining adjective being little less than that of the noun it defines; note, too, that in this pair the first impulse is of longer duration than the second, for its emotion-stress (pride of defeated and fallen angels) does not permit of its being passed over hurriedly. *Full high*  in v. 536 presents the same sort of an interval. In v. 537 *Shon like* gives , where the second impulse is lower than the first; *a met-* shows a mere touch of impulse followed by a sharply and strongly felt one; in

-eor stream- we have two slight impulses joined to make a single wave which is followed by an unusually long impulse  since emotion-stress here falls upon an impulse containing a diphthongal vowel followed by a resonant consonant; in *-ing to* appear two rather long impulses lacking intensity , though *to* has a slight rhythm-stress which distinguishes it from *-ing; the wind* might be represented by  .

Now these definite stress series are not imaginary, but due entirely to the words themselves. We can see that this is true if we attempt to alter the words of the thought, still keeping the meaning harmonious to the context and the general rhythm form intact. Take v. 540, for instance,

"Sonorous mettal blowing martial sounds."

Sonorous may be represented by , *so-* being long and catching secondary word-stress, *-nor-* long with primary stress, and *-ous* having very low secondary stress; *mettal*, again, is , *blowing* , etc. We might represent the sequence by



We might have had in place of this line another, say

"The sounds of martial music smote their ears"

a series like 

whose rhythm-waves are entirely different from those of Milton's verse, though their sequence quite adequately answers the formal demands of the verse. Or, again, who can fail to appreciate the difference between the two phrases (we shall see later that they are prosodically equal),

"A shout that tore Hell's concave"

and

"With orient colours waving"?

Rewrite these as

"A cry which rent the vault of Hell"

and

"Waving with orient colours"

and the alterations are at once apparent, not so much in the sense as in the rhythm; in the first pair we have *A shout* abruptly rising and finishing with sharp definition, as compared with *A cry*, equally abrupt but with its final impulse lacking in definition; *that tore* with its first impulse abruptly closed by the following *t* of the next word, and the second unfinished in the prolonged *r-* sound, as compared with *which rent* possessing the very opposite character; *Hell's con-* with its tensely stressed first impulse—a defining word with emo-

tion-stress — and its short, word-stressed second impulse, both of almost equal force, as compared with the simple easy differentiation of *the vault.*

In the rewritten phrases little alteration has been made in the sense — the second one is expressed in precisely the same words; but in respect to their rhythm they are as different from Milton's phrases as they well could be, though, saving the alteration in "and beyond" which the extra impulse in the first one necessitates, they are quite unexceptionable in respect to their prosodic character.

We may seize upon "With orient colours waving" to keep before our minds the fact that what we have been taking together as a sort of unit, *i.e.* a pair of stressed impulses compared with one another in respect to their varying intensity, is not really a unit in English verse. For in "With orient colours waving" the continuity in *or-ient col-ours wav-ing* is much more marked than that between *-ient* and *col-*, and *-ours* and *wav-*, which latter are the pairs of impulses our theoretical notions of a verse-unit compel us to take together.

English verse, as we have shown in Chapter IX., is not made up of formal unit-groups of equal or approximately equal value, and there are no feet in it, if feet are made up of two distinct things. But nevertheless, as in verse of

this sort the even impulses have their prosodic value only with reference to the immediately preceding odd impulse, we may consider the impulses as being paired *odd* + *even* in analyzing our verse form from a prosodic standpoint; we must always remember, however, that it is the difference between these impulses, not their sum, that is significant for the verse form; and the actual union of the various, discrete, even impulses into series may quite disregard our prosodical analysis, as it does here in "With orient colours waving."

In these verses from Milton, then, we have a succession of wave-impulses of various forms. The only constant element is their regular recurrence in certain series; what these series are, and how they punctuate the verse, we shall take up in the next chapter. For the present, let us examine somewhat further the constituent elements of these single waves. We may at once assume that Milton's verse is normal English verse, and that such waves as we find in it we shall find all through good English poetry.

There are evidently two elements, viz., attention and duration, which give these waves their various forms. We have drawn them to abscissa and coördinate, the horizontal line representing duration and the vertical line representing intensity. If we examine these two elements, we

shall see that the element of stress is the one that determines the prosodic form of the wave-group, while the element of duration affects only the configuration of the waves so determined.

For the wave successions are so irregular in their respective durations that no possible constant formal æsthetic arrangement can be discovered in them, if time-durations of the impulses be considered as determining the form of the series. But we have already seen in Chapter IX. that English poetry does not recognize quantitative arrangements as a means of punctuating its verse form.

When we come to look at the respective intensities of the impulses, — the amplitude, so to speak, of their vibrations, — a regular æsthetic arrangement is immediately discernible, and this arrangement can be reduced to a formula. *In each group of thought-moments the even impulse* (with a single class of exceptions which we will discuss later) *has always an appreciably greater attention-stress than the preceding odd impulse.* Sometimes the intensity difference is very slight, as in "proud hon-"; sometimes it is strongly marked as in "the war-"; but whether little or great, it is always there; and if we remove this regularly recurring differentiation, making the thought-impulses run —

"Then com | mands strait | that his | standard | be rear'd |
At the | sound of | loud trum | pets and | clariouns | ,"

we do not recognize the idea as having poetic form. But we can alter the time-duration of the successive impulses without this impairment, as in —

> Then he commands that with the thrilling sound
> Of trumpets blaring loud and ringing clarions
> They strait uprear his glorious standard.

And this is true of any passage of English poetry: *one may alter the respective time-durations of its impulses at will, without destroying the formal æsthetic arrangement of the verse; but just as soon as one begins to alter their relative intensities, the æsthetic arrangement disappears.*

It is the relative intensities of the successive waves, therefore, and not their respective durations, that determine the rhythm-pulses of English verse. And we have already seen in Chapter VIII. that something more than a regular succession of rhythm-pulses is necessary to determine an English verse form; viz., a more or less regular numerical coincidence of rhythm-pulses with thought-moment structure. If we examine the passage quoted from Milton or the sonnet of Shakspere in Chapter VIII., we shall see that for these verse forms, the coincidence is with a series of one or more thought-moments, usually two, but

sometimes one and sometimes three. Other passages of English poetry would show similar coincidences though not always upon a five-group basis.

We may therefore define an English verse form as *a more or less regular series of rhythm-pulses determined by stress and arranged in certain numerical groups coincident with the moment structure of the thought.*

This then is the basis of the whole system of Modern English Prosody. But an examination of any English poem will reveal certain differences in the various verses. They will always conform to the type as determined by our general principle, but within the limits of this conformity there will be a range of variation in their structure that is of vital significance to the poetic form.

What is the basis of this variation?

In describing the few wave-groups which we took from our Milton passage, — and any passage of English poetry would show wave-groups similar in character, — we saw clearly that in each wave there was a horizontal component, as it were, giving it a certain length-character; *the war* (-like), for instance, was quite a different group from *proud bon* (-our), not only in respect to the relative intensity of its two parts, but also in respect to their comparative length.

Although this length variation is not proportionate, English verse does contain quantitative elements. And the length variation rests upon certain fundamental distinctions of English syllable impulses in respect to quantity, *i.e.* in the time required to bring all their sound elements before the mind. A diphthong is not appreciably longer in English than a single vowel; or to put it in a different form, the utterance of a diphthong in the same time as a single vowel does not impair the identity of a syllable in which it stands. One can easily appreciate this by uttering a series of "out" 's in the same time as a series of "at" 's, or a series of "take" 's in the same time as a series of "tack" 's, measuring the respective duration of each impulse by a metronome; he will find that another ear will not have difficulty in determining the identity of the "out" 's and "at" 's, or of the "take" 's and "tack" 's, when they are uttered in approximately equal time.[1]

[1] But to the Roman and Greek mind, at least to the minds of those who used the Latin and Greek literary language, "natural" quantity seems to have been an element in determining the identity of the various syllabic impulses; *armă* and *armā* were just as different to his mind as *cónvert* and *convért* are to an English mind. We users of English can scarcely appreciate this fact; but the tradition of a quantitative relation was so strong in Mediæval Latin that it developed a new series of stress relations in which these quantitative distinctions were translated into terms

But when one comes to add consonant groups to these impulses, a distinction in time length becomes more apparent. Try, for instance, a series of "owl"'s with a series of "out"'s, or a series of "tear"'s (to rend) with a series of "tack"'s, and the difficulty of giving them equal times without destroying their identity is at once apparent.

There is, then, quantity in English, though its determining principles are quite different from those of Latin, with a quite different effect upon

of intensity, and this new "accent" system quite displaced the original classic system of accentuation. So that to this day in the ordinary practice of scansion in English and American Universities, we read such a verse as the first of —

"Vīdēs ŭt āltā stēt nivĕ cāndīdūm
Soracte, nec iam sustineant onus
Silvae laborantes, geluque
Flumina constiterint acuto"

as if its intended æsthetic effect had been

' × × ' × ' × × ' × ×
Vides ut alta stet nive candidum

and defend our practice by the statement that "accent" lengthens a syllable, and "so it amounts to the same thing." And this "amounting to the same thing" produces such words as "sústineánt" "labórantés" "cónstiterínt," often with the corresponding English phonetic disfiguration which gives them the forms "sɔ́s-tĭn-ĭ-ǽnt" "lǽbŏ́r-ǽnt-ĭz," "cŏ́n-stĭt-ə-rĭ́nt," words which would be as unintelligible to a Roman as would be our ordinary reading of the *Canterbury Tales* to Chaucer. As Chaucer and Horace had never heard such a speech as we put into their mouths, it would have been psychologically impossible for them to comprehend it orally, let alone think with it.

the identity of words. We have elsewhere made the statement that "accent" does not necessarily make an English accented syllable long nor lack of accent make it short; but this also is quite another thing from saying that stress has no quantitative effect upon English syllables. Unstressed syllables in English lose some of their quantity in consequence of their lack of stress; Middle English "*knowleche*," "*battaile*" when they lose the secondary stress upon their second syllables become "*nolidg*," "*battl*," and so with hosts of other words. But an early Middle English "*bonour*" does not become Modern English "*bo"nər*" when the whole stress incidence is upon its first syllable. To say, therefore, that the time values of English syllables are affected by stress incidence is not tantamount to saying that stress lengthens a syllable and lack of stress shortens it.

English quantity is a subject that has not yet been sufficiently investigated, and where it has been studied at all, the student has been so impressed with the quantitative distinctions of Latin and Greek that he has unconsciously sought to read into English the quantitative distinctions he has learned from Latin grammar.

It is a general principle of English speech, then, that the consonantal character of an English speech impulse is of far more influence in determining

its duration than is its vocalic character. Any one who studies the passage cited from Milton will see that this is true. Spirantal consonants and consonant groups clearly lengthen the syllables in which they stand; sibilants, likewise; sonorous consonants also have their effect in adding to the time-duration of a syllable; while stopped consonants tend to shorten it.

These natural duration conditions are greatly affected by the natural associates of the word; and such natural associations are rendered far more effective by emotion-stress; *e.g.*, in "short and sharp" the normally long impulses are greatly contracted by the association of ideas which puts the two words together. Indeed, almost any one will yield to the association in the words *short* and *long* to such an extent as to appreciably shorten the time of one, and appreciably lengthen the time of the other.

This quantitative relation, then, varying and fluctuating under the influence of emotional associations, gives us the horizontal components of rhythm-impulses and lends variety and interest to the verse form. Thus it is that in the same poem we may have such series as

> "Anon they move
> In perfect Phalanx to the Dorian mood
> Of flutes and soft Recorders"

and

> "Thus they
> Moved on in silence to soft Pipes that charmed
> Their painful steps o're the burnt soyle,"

— the one series picturing by its form the regular rhythmic movement of squadrons falling into habitual line and place; the other picturing by its form the breaking of the rhythmic time as the anguished host gingerly steps over the burning ground.

Indeed, with such a series of rhythms, almost infinitely variable, the English poet can suggest almost any notion to the mind by presenting its rhythmic associate.

These waves, thus variously determined by the changing incidence of stress and variously modified by varying time-durations of the impulses, give us the fundamental elements of our English prosody.

CHAPTER XIV

VARIETIES OF ENGLISH RHYTHM-SERIES

As has been stated in Chapter XIII., the wave-groups there considered do not occur as discrete units of the verse. In reading, *e.g.*,

"Then strait commands that at the warlike sound"

one does not think of *then* and *strait* together, nor is one conscious of any difference between *then strait* and *strait commands*.[1]

We cannot say, therefore, that the mind gathers its æsthetic impression of the whole verse by becoming conscious of the five groups that meas-

[1] But the coincidence or lack of coincidence between wave-groups and word-groups is an important element in the rhythm-series; *e.g.*, in

"Like to the lark at break of day arising"

the groups *the lark — at break — of day* divide the rhythm movement into regular pulses that are suggestive of lark flight. Similarly in

"With orient colours waving"

the continuity of the rhythm-waves is suggestive of a banner waving in the wind; or again in

"And Death once dead, there's no more dying then"

the coincidence of the first three wave-groups with the word-groups is suggestive of finality irrevocably determined.

ure it. What is established in the mind, when one reads this and similar verses, is a consciousness of a series in which each even numbered impulse receives more of its attention than the preceding odd impulse.

When we say that the even impulses have an appreciably greater stress than the preceding odd impulses, it does not mean, however, that the odd impulses are always unstressed, or that the even impulses have always full stress. If we look at such a series as

"That proud honour claimed
Azazel as his right,"

we see clearly that "proud" and "his" are by no means unstressed impulses. Likewise "as," though it is an even impulse, is by no means a full stressed word; and we should find such variations all through English poetry. But though the odd impulses are not always unstressed impulses, and the even impulses are not always full stressed impulses, no full stressed impulses stand in the odd numbered places, and no unstressed impulses stand in the even numbered places (with one class of exceptions which we shall examine below); it is only the secondarily stressed impulses that can occupy either position. To make this clearer: if we call the successive impulses

a x a x a x a x a x

a is never a full stressed impulse, and *x* is never an unstressed impulse, but either *a* or *x* can be a secondarily stressed impulse. (Of course, the few selections we have taken for our illustrations do not prove this, nor is all poetry written in *a x a x* etc. form. Our statement to be of general validity should be qualified by "in single rising rhythm"; for verse forms in falling rhythm the order *a x* would have to be reversed.)

The even impulse, then, with a single class of exceptions, has always an appreciably greater stress than the preceding odd impulse. But why the qualification "preceding"? Does not the following odd impulse always have a lighter stress than the preceding even impulse? By no means. We have already pointed out the fact that *proud* in *that proud honour* has, or may have, an increment of emotion-stress which makes it almost as significant as *honour*, certainly more significant than *that*. Similarly in such verses as

> "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
> I summon up remembrance of things past,"

sweet and *things* have an appreciably greater stress than *of*. Or, in

> "there's no more dying then,"

more can carry with it an intense emotion-stress that makes it of even greater significance than *no*,

without impairing the rhythm of the verse form. It is surely not an unstressed impulse in comparison with *no*. Or in

> "Like to the lark at break of day arising
> From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate"

sings is not of less significance either for sense or emotion than is *earth*. And we could find hosts of such illustrations in Shakspere's and Milton's blank verse.

Such crescendoes of rhythm as these we have cited would be quite impossible if the odd impulses were always and necessarily less stressed than the preceding even impulses.

The verse forms we have been using as illustrations are of a peculiar character in the fact that *the even numbered impulse has always an appreciably greater stress than the preceding odd impulse;* we may call this sort of rhythm "rising rhythm," and we may postulate for its fundamental law that *the stress of the even impulse is always compared with that of the preceding odd impulse in determining the series, and has nothing to do with the stress of the odd impulse immediately following.*

These rising-rhythm verse forms punctuate by far the best of our English poetry; and the five-measure series is conspicuously the finest and subtlest form of it that English literature has devel-

oped. And there is good reason why this should be so. In the first place, English forms of thinking are almost invariably prepositive for qualified nominal notions, and post-positive for qualified verbal notions; and the nominal notion is usually in the forefront of an English ideation series. Thus the beginning of a thought-formulation under normal conditions of English thinking is usually in rising rhythm. Moreover, in Modern English the majority of nominal notions associated with emotion, and therefore most serviceable for poetry, are either stressed monosyllables or dissyllables with stress on the first syllable. The commonest adjectives are monosyllabic without inflectional endings; and commonest general category is definite or indefinite determinate + nominal notion; perhaps the next in point of frequency is adjective + noun, a normal group of ″ ′. It is difficult, therefore, to begin a falling series of rhythm-waves in English. It is likewise difficult to end such a series; for the verb + monosyllabic object or the verb + monosyllabic adverb presents an unescapable rising series. Of course, good falling rhythm can be written in English, but under normal conditions it necessitates abnormal inversions of ideation, or the too frequent use of pollysyllabic words at the verse ends, or abnormal divisions of the thought-moments.

In other words, *normally forcible and idiomatic English ideation is largely cumulative in its stress relations, and almost necessitates rising rhythm for a forcible and idiomatic English verse form.*

Shakspere rarely resorts to falling rhythms, and then only in four- or three-series in lyric measures. Even in these he is constantly finishing his falling rhythms with rising verse-ends, or inserting wholly rising verses into the midst of his falling series. His long series of dramas, and his sonnets, the finest and most effective poetry that has ever been written, are in rising rhythms. Even Chaucer, whose language contained syllabic inflections for almost all words, making falling rhythm easier than it is in Modern English, instinctively avoided it. And every great English poet from Chaucer to Browning has shunned the inevitable weakness that associates itself with an English verse form in falling rhythm.

There is also good reason why the standard rhythm measure should be a unit of five, and not of four or of six — a reason to be found in the nature of normal English ideation, though we have not space to go into the matter here.

Let us examine, therefore, a little more closely what we may call the standard English verse form; for an examination of this will necessarily yield more for a knowledge of English verse form than will an examination of any other.

One of the first things that strikes attention is the frequent presence of a falling group at the beginning of either or both the thought-moments that make up its verse. Suppose we take: —

"To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause; there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin?"

In the first verse the second moment begins with a falling rhythm-group; in the second, the first moment begins so; likewise the first of the fourth, fifth, eleventh, twelfth verses, etc. There seems to be all the way through an *ad libitum* use

of this variation; and so to a greater or less degree in all English poetry. We have already made use of this common phenomenon of English verse form to prove the presence of a consciousness of the thought-moments of a verse in the minds of the poet who writes and the reader who reads English poetry.

It makes its appearance early, antedating Chaucer, who uses it with wonderful skill and dexterity — just how early, is a question for the history of poetry to answer. Likewise, the cause of it is a question for psychology to answer. But its effect is undeniable. It gives variety to a series which might otherwise be monotonous; it calls attention to successive details in the thought; it lends itself to a subtle interpretation of ideas and experiences into terms of rhythm; it relieves the verse from limitations which would arise when sentence-stressed connectives, highly stressed definitive notions, emotionally stressed but unqualified nominal or verbal notions fall at the beginning of a new thought-moment — a limitation which would be most serious in a wholly rising rhythm-series.

Here is an almost virgin field for scientific investigation; for no one has yet thoroughly studied the phenomenon, and our current prosody entirely ignores it, turning it off with the

statement that "a trochaic foot may begin an iambic verse."

Still another striking phenomenon is the presence of a falling impulse at the verse-end, which, though it has been used as a sort of chemical test to determine the sequence of Shakspere's plays, — not a very vital question in the study of literature, for we should not be much better off if we knew the day and hour when Shakspere began and finished each one of them, — has not yet been scientifically investigated.

Still another interesting phenomenon in the history of English rising rhythms is the frequent occurrence in this form of Modern English verse of an occasional doubled unstressed impulse, what Germans call the "*doppelte Senkung*." We do not yet know whether these are due to an ignorant imitation of misunderstood earlier verse forms, as are our modern "improper" or "imperfect" rhymes (which are not rhymes at all, by the way), or are inherent in the nature of English speech-rhythms. But like the "improper" rhymes, they are undoubtedly with us to stay, and are phenomena which the scientific student of English verse cannot overlook.

These and a host of other phenomena of this verse form, like the artificial stresses by which the stress relation of adjective + noun sometimes

appears in early verse as ' "; or the beginning of a second half verse with an unstressed impulse when the preceding half verse has closed with an unstressed impulse; or the dropping of an unstressed impulse when it would have occupied the place of a strong "rhetorical" pause — these are some of the numerous phenomena which the study of poetry has to record and, as far as possible, account for.

Instead of these we have treatises on the different forms of stanza, when most of our best poetry is not strophic at all; on the different forms of verse-units, when most of our poetry is written in one form of verse-unit; the cataloguing of rhyme phenomena, when the best of our poetry is written in unrhymed verse forms — dreary, inapposite, inadequate, and ineffectual classifications and cataloguings of dry bones.[1]

[1] Of course we do not mean to imply that the study of English verse has been useless because it has not been as effectual as it might have been, nor that painstaking and tireless investigators have vainly piled up masses of non-significant and unimportant detail, because they have not concerned themselves with vital interests. But cannot we do better with better tools and better insight? Are we to ignore entirely the changing methods and changing ideals of science when we come to study our language and its literature? Are we always to content ourselves with the mellow opinions and pleasant formalities of charming personalities, and never pierce beyond mellowness and pleasantness in our

So much then, for this common and fertile English verse form.

Falling rhythms we have already roughly described. Here the conditions are that the odd numbered impulses have an appreciably greater stress than the even numbered impulses. These rhythms have a shorter history than has the rising series, and begin about Shakspere's time. There are occasional verses in Middle English poetry whose sequences are practically of a descending character, but appearing sporadically, as they do, in the midst of rising rhythms, the æsthetic sentiment rather considers them as rising series lacking the first impulse ("*auftaktlos*") than as normal instances of falling series.

The numerical index of falling verse forms, as one might call it, is normally four; if longer, the cæsuras are usually strongly marked, and medial, dividing the verse into two more or less equal thought-moments, so that the impression the whole line makes is equivalent to that of two short verses, and its length is often a mere question of printing.

Falling forms, too, are mainly used for lyric

search for truth? Must we ask no questions for fear of disturbing these eminently respectable *idola theatri* which we have learned to cherish?

purposes; for if there is any doubt as to the comparative difference of two impulses, the English mind will decide for a rising group and defeat the poet's purpose. For instance, such a verse as —

"Dreamlike and indistinct and strange were all things around them"

seems so like a rising series with an initial falling rhythm-group that the reader, thinking of it apart from its rhythm context, will take it for a rising verse and clip the "around" to "round," though it is intended for a six-group series in "mixed" falling rhythm.

This last illustration brings before us a variety of rhythm in which the unstressed impulses of certain wave-groups are doubled. Such verse is quite common in English poetry.

When the unstressed impulse of every wave-group is thus doubled we may call the series double rhythm. If the rhythm of the verse is rising, we shall have double rising rhythm, and if falling, double falling rhythm.

When, as very frequently happens, both single and double groups occur in the same verse, we have mixed rising rhythm or mixed falling rhythm.

We can therefore classify rhythm-series in respect to outward form under the following rubrics: —

Single rising rhythm.
Single falling rhythm.
Double rising rhythm.
Double falling rhythm.
Mixed rising rhythm.
Mixed falling rhythm.

There is a more subtle distinction, however, that has developed itself in English poetry, and depends not so much on the form of the rhythm-groups which make up the verse, as it does on their character as determined by the relative stress values of the successive impulses. And this is a distinction which we may roughly bring under the terms Lyric and Non-lyric series.

In every poem which is to be sung to music or suggests a musical accompaniment, the stressed syllables are as a rule sharply differentiated from the unstressed syllables, and the secondarily stressed syllables are likewise sharply and clearly felt to be medially stressed impulses.

Almost any good lyric will show this clearly. Take, for instance, Autolycus' song in the *Winter's Tale*: —

" ' " ' × ' " '
"Jog on, jog on, the foot path way
× ' ×" ' × ' ×
And merrily hent the stile-a;
× ' × ' " ' × '
A merry heart goes all the day,
" ' ' ×× ' ×
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

The incidence of the verse stresses is so musical that the song sets its own tune. And so in —

" On the ground
Sleep sound;
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover remedy.
When thou wak'st
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye.
And the country proverb known
That every man shall have his own
In your waking shall be shown.
Jack shall have Jill
Nought shall go ill.
The man shall have his mare again
And all shall be well" —

even to the pianissimo staccato movement of the cadence repeating the two themes of the tune in reversed order. It would be hard to avoid a cer-

tain more or less musical form for these verses, and any derangement of the stress series would completely spoil the lyric effect of the verse. For instance: —

While you sleep
I will steep
Your charmed eye
With remedy,
Healing your sick phantasy.
That when you wake
You shall take
Your old delight
In the sight
Of your former true love's eye

quite destroys the rhythm tune of the verses, or rather, sets a new one, which is unmusical and incongruous, though the verse form is unaltered and the sense is substantially the same as it was before.

Any comparison of lyric forms with those of descriptive verse will also show clearly an avoidance of groups of rhythm-waves in which strong secondarily stressed impulses stand next to full stressed impulses. Such verses as

"So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then"

are almost impossible perfectly to adapt to a musical rhythm, because the import of the words is lost if the secondary stresses are reduced to unstressed

impulses, as some of them must needs be in any musical arrangement to which they are fitted.

This distinction is fundamental in determining the lyric quality of a rhythm-series, and is nowhere better illustrated than in the Elizabethan lyrics. Even dramatic poetry may be given lyric suggestiveness by thus making the rhythm intervals distinct and clear. Any reader of *Romeo and Juliet* will have noticed the lyric quality that breathes through the whole play, giving the tragedy as it were a background of joy and light. Even its climax beginning

> "How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have they been merry"

and ending

> "O here
> Will I set up my everlasting rest,
> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world wearied flesh. Eyes look your last.
> Arms take your last embrace. And lips, O you
> The doors of breath seal with a righteous kiss
> A dateless bargain to engrossing death.
> Come bitter conduct! come unsavory guide!
> Thou desperate pilot now at once run on
> The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark.
> Here's to my love!"

There is this song motive distinctly woven into the tragic scene with a pathos unmatched in literature.

Compare with this the ending of *Lear*: —

> "And my poor fool is hanged! No, no, no life!
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
> And thou no breath at all! Thou'lt come no more,
> Never! never! never!"[1]

Let us gather up the facts we have pointed out in this chapter in a brief summary of the principles of English verse form.

English rhythms run either in falling or rising series of successive rhythm-waves. In rising rhythms the even impulse is differentiated from the preceding odd impulse by receiving a greater amount of attention-stress.

In rising rhythm a thought-moment may begin with a falling wave-group; or, in other words, a series in rising rhythm may be reversed for two impulses at the beginning of a new thought-moment.

In falling rhythm the odd impulse is differentiated from the following even impulse by receiving a greater amount of attention-stress.

In double rhythm the less stressed impulse is repeated.

[1] "Poor fool" is an Elizabethan expression of endearment, and its reference is to Cordelia (see *Oxford Dictionary*, *s.v.* "fool," 1 c.). The Folio adds two more "nevers," and one editor of Shakspere, not being content with this, has added a sixth!

In mixed rhythm the less stressed impulse is sometimes repeated, sometimes not.

Corollary: *Full stressed impulses do not occur in the odd numbered places of rising rhythm, except in the case of "reversal," nor in the even numbered places of falling rhythm.*

Unstressed impulses do not occur in the even numbered places of rising rhythm, except in the case of "reversal," nor in the odd numbered places of falling rhythm.

Secondarily stressed impulses may occur in any position in the verse.

These are some of the fundamental principles which determine the wave-series of our English verse-punctuation system, the fundamental laws of our English Prosody.

CHAPTER XV

MAJOR RHYTHM SERIES

THE various rhythm series of an English verse form, then, not only punctuate its thought into rhythmic sequences of a definite character, but add a new æsthetic element to the thought by associating with its successive impulses certain forms of arrangement which the mind perceives with pleasure. Some of the commonest forms of æsthetic arrangement for which the English mind has developed a peculiar predilection we have briefly analyzed.

These types of verse form, consisting of various arbitrary rhythmic arrangements of successive thought-impulses, are, however, not the sole rhythmic element of English poetry. For there is present also a larger rhythm of the thought itself, a rhythm which we have all along assumed to be the basic fundamental element of poetic form.

Now that we have a comparatively clear idea of the punctuating system of our English verse form, and can separate its æsthetic elements from the other æsthetic elements which poetry presents, let

us return for a brief consideration of the thought-moments themselves.

We have already noticed in Shakspere's cxlvi[th] sonnet, a certain succession of these thought-moments that was in the main a rhythmic succession. The fundamental unit in this succession was, as we saw, a group of notions marked off by the coincidence of five rising wave-groups determined by the varying attention-stress of the successive impulses of the ideation — in other words what is called a verse. This verse-unit, continually and regularly repeated, thus becomes the foundation of a new series of rhythms, rising and falling, not with the varying intensities of the thought-impulses, but with the varying significance of the thought-moments, as we have called them.

To distinguish between these two series, let us call that which depends upon the varying intensity of the thought-impulses the "minor" series; and that which depends upon the varying significance of the thought-moments the "major" series; and, having obtained a clear notion of the former, let us look a little more closely at the latter.

For the sake of getting before our attention an easy and simple sequence in the "major" series, suppose we take Shakspere's lxvi[th] sonnet.

"Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,

And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly doctor-like controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that to die, I leave my love alone."

Here the first verse ends with "cry," forming a distinct introduction to the series; it consists of two moments, "Tired with all these" and "for restful death I cry." The second verse starts with a single impulse which is in reality a moment by itself, and expresses the poet's intention to recapitulate the details of the notion in "these"; the rest of the verse introduces the first of the injustices which have wearied his soul, "beholding merit born a beggar"; a sharp division between subject and predicate ends a thought-moment at "desert," and the verse closes with "born." The next verse is made up of two thought-moments divided at "nothing"; the next, of two more divided at "faith"; the next, of two more divided at "honour"; and so on, each verse down through v. 12 being divided into

two moments (in v. 10 "doctor-like," of course, logically belongs with "controlling," though grammatically it seems to describe "folly"). Then the introductory theme is repeated, with a different turn to the latter moment of it, and made a finale by the introduction of secondary stresses which slow its movement and prolong the last impulse in "alone."

There is undeniably a clear, unmistakable rhythm-sequence here that is made by the successive moments of the thought: a rhythm-sequence that with its weary iteration, its monotony, is aptly suggestive of the poet's mood. If one were to take the successive moments and interpret their rhythmic details into the terms of music, their sequence would of itself suggest the emotion in the poet's mind without any descriptive addition of words.

The minor series in each of these moments stamps it with a peculiar individuality, and the moment becomes itself a unit, a rhythmic entity.

Take the first and change it so that it will begin with a rising impulse, *e.g.* "Aweary of the world," and the association of rebellious impatience with fate's injustice is lost out of the rhythm entirely; it becomes a mere helpless wail. Take the first impulses of vv. 3 to 12 and begin some of them with a reversal of the first wave and the "dam-

nable iteration" at once disappears. Take the first moments of vv. 8, 9, and 10, and lengthen them, *e.g.* —

> "And manly strength by limping sway disabled
> And free-born art bound by authority,
> And Doctor folly reprehending skill,"

and the alteration, if its detriment to the verse be for the nonce overlooked, removes the crescendo from the series culminating in "And captive good attending captain ill," and quite changes the emotional effect of the series.

To vary the rhythm of the last couplet and yet keep its sense were an impossible task. But is it not evident without such alteration that the equal balancing of the thought-moments, the beginning both verses with a falling rhythm, the ending the latter with a word whose wave-form is suggestive of longing incompleteness — is it not obvious that we have here just such rhythmic expression as we should have in a well-written musical cadence which dealt with the same theme? Can we not see the poet shouldering again his weary burden and staggering on beneath its load?

We have much the same idea in this sonnet as in the xxxth, the "heavy telling o'er from woe to woe The sad account of forebemoaned moan."

But there the sonnet ends with a glorious burst of sunlight, banishing the clouds from the poet's sky, —

> "But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
> All losses are restored and sorrows end."

The rhythm is smooth and even, the waves of it strong and clear, and the cadence is made entirely of stressed and unstressed impulses (save the first) — "losses" "restored" "sorrows" "end" —, and the concluding impulse is definite and determined, without the protracted impulse in "alone."

Now take this couplet, and having once obtained a clear idea of its rhythm, substitute it for the concluding couplet of the sonnet we have been considering, the lxvith. The idea is now not quite the logical conclusion of the thought: but ignoring this, is not the rhythm-series quite inappropriate, defeating the purpose of all that goes before? The impatience has gone too suddenly; the clouds are too thick to have cleared away so soon; there is obviously too violent a transition from the minor to the major key; the poet has too easily forgot "the whips and scorns of time" that make calamity of so long life.

If such were to be the natural conclusion to the emotion, there should have been a hint of transition earlier. Such a hint we do have in the xxixth: —

"When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

Here the major rhythm series begins to change with the word "Yet" in v. 9: breaks into rapid crescendo with long sweeps of impulse in vv. 10 and 11, and hangs poised in v. 12. The conclusion has no need to recall the octavo: the quatrain has banished all that. The poet's heart, like the lark-song, is far above the earthy ground, and the last two verses are a melodious, rich, full-throated rhythm-song, as strong and free as English words can make them.

It would be interesting to trace out all the symphonic series of major rhythms which Shakspere has put into these sonnets of his. For each of them is clear and definite when once the key is found; some of them contain a rhythm-structure

that is the highest expression of æsthetic form art can reach. But that would take too much of our time and space.

It only remains to call attention to the fact that such æsthetic arrangements of major rhythms as we find here, are not peculiar to these poems. Let us look at some of them as they serve Shakspere's dramatic purposes. Take, for instance, *Hamlet*, II. 2. 576 ff.:—

"O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!"[1]

[1] It is well to get clearly in mind the connotations of these Elizabethan words. "Passion" means 'grief,' 'sorrow,' 'suffering,' not emotion in general. "Conceit" is the Elizabethan name for the imaginative faculty. "Working" is widely used for mental activities in Elizabethan English. "Distraction" is a noun corresponding to the adjective 'distraught.' "In's" is a frequent Elizabethan contraction for 'in his.' "Aspect" in El. E. is stressed on the last syllable. "Function" means 'outward conduct,' 'gesture' in El. E. "Suiting" is El. E. for 'adapting itself to.' "To" is used in the now obsolete sense 'according to.' "Conceit" in this second instance is equivalent to our modern English 'thought,' *i.e.* the activity of the imaginative faculty.

Here the verse starts with a reversed rhythm-wave. The first impulse "O" has a peculiar emotion-stress when it is an exclamation of disgust and despair as it is here, beginning with stress of attention on the first part of the diphthong, and gradually weakening through its latter impulse. As to its stress relation, it is quite a different word from "O" in "O vengeance," whose rhythm is crescendo, or from "O" as an expression of agony, as in "O, I die, Horatio," where the stress cumulates in the middle of the wave. Here its downward plunge is repeated in "what a," in which "what" has less stress than "O," but the same wave configuration. "Rogue" gives the rhythm-series a sharp upward turn, metrically supplying the crest of the second rhythm-wave. Then we have a series, "and peasant slave am I," in which the first rising wave culminates in a stress which is secondary when considered in reference to "slave" (adjective word-stress), the second crest is protracted by the nature of the diphthong and the following voiced spirant, the "am" is a mere unstressed connective, and the third wave-crest is in "I," which has a sense-stress from the implication of contrast between Hamlet and the player. The whole series represents the kindling of self-disgust which is in Hamlet's words, and has already been forecast by the upward turn in the last wave of the

first series. If the reader is in any doubt as to the force of this rhythm-series, let him imagine Hamlet to have said —

"A very peasant slave, a rogue am I,"

which is a very passable "iambic pentameter."

Then follows a rapid crescendo of rhythm in "Is it not monstrous," with the reversed group at the beginning, secondary stresses on "is" and "not," and its full stress on "mon-," and the falling close echoing another access of disgust. Then the rapid descriptive rhythm, as Hamlet turns from himself to the "player-fellow," with its secondary stresses on "that this" reflecting the tenseness of the thought. Suppose his words had been —

"Is't not a monstrous fact that in a fiction,
In a mere dream of passion, this poor player," etc.,

equally good rhythm as far as form goes!

"But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,"

with heavy stress on "but" and "dream," carries out Hamlet's notion of self-contempt, blending it with a new contempt for soulless art.

"Could force his soul so to his own conceit,"

with its cumulative rhythms, suggests the notion of persistent force, the lack of which is the plague-spot in Hamlet's character. This suggestion is

rapidly carried through the rhythm-series of the following verses, and culminates in "conceit," v. 583. Suppose we had —

> "Forcing his soul so to his own conceit,
> Could by her working make his visage wan,
> His eyes drop tears, his looks express distraction,
> His broken voice and his whole function suiting
> With forms to match the motions of his soul."

The form of expression in these lines is normal Elizabethan English, the grammar is faultless, the associations are much the same as those of Shakspere's words; the rhythm, again, is good "iambic pentameter." Why do my verses, then, fail of their purpose? Why are they not as effective as Shakspere's? Is it not evident that they lack only the artful adjustment of the rhythm to the idea, and lose this forcing-notion and its crescendo movement by unfortunate breaks in the rhythm-series and by an effectual fading away of the rhythm of the last verse?

Then take the rhythm of Hamlet's comment when he sums it all in his —

> "And all for nothing!"

with its long, full stress on "all," and its falling end, "for nothing," with the contemptuous, sneering echo, —

> "For Hecuba!"

Let the rhythm series end in —

"And all, forsooth,
Because old Priam lost his wife."

There is surely contempt enough in these words; they represent clearly enough the thought of Hamlet's mind; they adequately fulfil the verse-form conditions; but they fail to express Hamlet himself and Hamlet's weakness. The venom of Hamlet's soul that lies in that bitter cry, with its strong upward rhythm sweep and its ineffectual close, la-la-la-la, is quite gone from the verse.

Now let us examine the passages that immediately follow this one and see how they reflect the thought and mood of Hamlet. We must be brief, else our illustration will overrun our space; but we can, at least, get a general notion of the major rhythm sequences from Shakspere's words that will enable us more clearly to understand the marvellous effects of his verse technique.

Hamlet's mood now changes from this bitterness of self-contempt to one of philosophizing. He imagines this player with a real motive for his acting, and pictures the result. As before, he throws himself into his picture. The rhythm begins easily this time, in a simple rising series culminating in "her."

"What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her?"

It is a quiet, sober inquiry, easy, natural. Then comes a new series introduced by a reversal marking the quick turn in the thought —

"What would he do,"

with a rapid cumulating series in —

"Had he the motive and the cue for passion,"[1]

ending in one of those Hamlet rhythm-phrases, la-laa-la— "That I have."

The answer follows in another rapid swirling crescendo of rhythm-phrases without a single check or backward turn, and with no falling verse ends, cumulating in a very scream of energy —

"Yet I —"

that stands alone as a single verse, poised for four whole rhythm-pulses, and joins the thought to the next passage, —

"He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general[2] ear with horrid[3] speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal[4] the free,[5] 590
Confound the ignorant,[6] and amaze[7] indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I —"

[1] "Cue" has the sense of 'humour,' 'disposition,' as well as of 'actor's cue.'

[2] 'Public.' [3] 'Frightful,' with a sub-connotation of 'rancorous.' [4] 'Make pale.' [5] 'Innocent.' [6] 'Unsuspecting.' [7] 'Stun,' 'bewilder.'

The next passage begins with self-contempt but now a self-contempt that has no energy. In the opening verses of the first passage there was a writhing movement in the rhythm that is quite lacking in —

"A dull and muddy mettled[1] rascal, peak,[2]
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of[3] my cause."

"And can say nothing"

finishes the phrasing with a falling wave, echoing the helplessness of Hamlet's despair in a dull rhythm-series of secondary stresses only slightly differentiated from one another. But there is a slight suggestion of awaking again as the thought of his father comes into his mind —

"no, not for a king,"

giving an extra cæsural pause after "no," and a high reversed wave in "not for." The verse is thus broken in two places, and the breaking suggests the shifting and turning of Hamlet's mind in his vain effort to escape the clutches of his despair, and then rises in regular series, —

"Upon whose property[4] and most dear life
A damn'd defeat[5] was made,"

[1] 'Dull-spirited.' [2] 'Not yet satisfactorily explained; probably = 'pine,' 'look sickly.' [3] 'Unskilful in,' with probably the sub-connotation of 'not bringing to an issue.'

[4] Here implying right and title to the crown.

[5] 'An act of destruction.'

with an access of hatred in the firm ending of "a damn'd defeat was made."

Then another intellectual mood, a philosophizing over the cause of this strange helplessness. 'Perhaps it's because he is a coward,' with the doubt again — 'no, that cannot be, he is not a coward, he has never submitted to what men call insults.'

"Am I a coward?"

with its reversal suggests the doubt, and the rapid, broken series reflects his rushing resentment as he conjures up the picture of the various insults: —

"Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' th' throat,
As deep as to the lungs?"

(All common Elizabethan forms of insult.)

The series ends in the defiance —

"Who does me this?
Ha?"

In this picture the cæsural pauses break the thought fairly in the middle of each verse, giving the effect of a series of eight short vibrant verses, each one tingling with insult — each a stinging blow across the face. The whole series cumulates again, as in "Yet I," with a single exclamation hanging poised through an entire verse measure. The word "Ha"

is not a mad laugh of derision as it seems to be in Modern English, but an exclamation that in Elizabethan English suggests indignant inquiry and remonstrance (it has an interrogation point after it in the Folio, and this seems to be the proper punctuation), which would be more fittingly represented by our now vulgar "Eh?" and holds the word up with a rising tone, high in pitch, almost a scream of rage at these fancied insults. It is the princely Hamlet, the gentleman, who is speaking now.

The fourth group of rhythm-phrases introduces a new moment. The access of rage is past, and the revulsion, the revulsion of utter helpless self-contempt, comes over him. Beginning with a terrible oath, "'Swounds,"[1] the thought sweeps and swirls downward into an abyss of self-contempt as he admits to himself that he must be a coward, that is the only explanation of it all:—

[1] "By His wounds," which Shakspere elsewhere uses but once, and that in another of Hamlet's ungovernable rages, v. 1. 297, when, over Ophelia's grave, he defies Laertes to match his love in deeds, —

> "I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
> Could not with all their quantity of love
> Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
> * * * * *
> 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do,
> * * * * *
> I'll do 't. — Dost thou come here to whine?"

"'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall[1]
To make oppression[2] bitter."

But the thought of the king and his villanies stings him into rage again, and the rhythm slowly rises on three secondary stresses —

"or ere this
I should have fatted all the region[3] kites
With this slave's offal."[4]

The last phrase twists and writhes through a series of secondary stresses with an intensity of hatred and bitterness that takes shape in a following series of peculiar falling rhythm waves, each one of which has a foam-covered crest "white as the bitten lip of hate." This rhythm, curling, hissing, tense, topful of venom, Alecto's serpents coiling and twisting through it, makes one of the most awful passages in all English poetry —

"Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless[5] villain!"

and culminates in Hamlet's cry —

"O vengeance!"

[1] 'Spirit to resent injury or insult.'

[2] 'Acts of violence and tyranny.'

[3] An Elizabethan construction equivalent to a modern adjective or limiting genitive.

[4] 'Worthless carcass,' offal being the term applied to the refuse of a carcass which the butcher throws away.

[5] 'Unnatural.'

which, with its peculiar sustained falling close, vibrates through the rest of the verse.

But the strain is too great, and Hamlet's nature breaks under it, the rhythm going back to the first motive of ineffectiveness, reëchoing its "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I" in shorter, weakened form —

"Why, what an ass am I,"

and plunging down in falling series of self-contempt, until it reaches the very nadir of abasement in —

"A scullion,"

whose rhythm is that of "O vengeance" with its first and third impulses shortened and weakened.

"Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!"

This storm of passion over, we have a rapid descriptive series, simple, uniform, regular, graphically representing the thought as the intellect picks up the thread of action again, and Hamlet plans out his trick to 'catch the conscience of the king.'

This, which is at best a mere sketch of the arrangement of the major rhythms in Hamlet's soliloquy, nevertheless shows clearly how effective

such arrangements can be. The question will naturally arise: Did Shakspere consciously construct them, having in view the definite purpose of affecting the reader as they do? Hardly: nor is it necessary that we assume that he did so. It may even be true that he wrote this passage 'without a blot in his papers.' But that does not prevent us from discovering them as one of the means by which he reaches our emotions. He might have been quite unconscious of their presence in his poetry and they could still be accounted for by assuming that when he wrote this part of *Hamlet* he felt and thought as Hamlet did, and that unconsciously, as his facile words took form in his mind, they associated themselves with impulses of feeling natural to the thought, and that his thought thus found the form of expression that was most fitting to it.

It is also interesting to note how associations that are rather intellectual than emotional unconsciously fix for themselves a peculiar rhythm-series in Shakspere. There is no finer illustration of this than one which appears in *Hamlet* almost in the form of a recurring rhythm-theme. The tragedy has long been recognized to be one of ineffectual purpose. Prompted to his revenge by heaven and hell, by high considerations of right and justice as well as by low motives of passion.

and revenge, he yet fails to carry it out and accomplishes it only by accident, frantically involving the king in his own death at the end of the play.

This ineffectual purpose works itself into the tragedy in the form of an oft-recurring rhythm-series which reflects it. This rhythm-series is made up of a long, full, rising wave followed by a short rising wave which either hangs in the air with an impulse considerably lower than that of the high impulse of the first wave or reaches this low point with effort and falls away helplessly in an unstressed impulse. The series is —

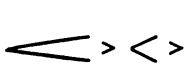
	la laa la la-la	"the rest is silence,"
or	la-laa-la la la la la	"Abuses me to damn me,"
or simply	la laa-la	"A scullion."

Some of these are —

"Devoutly to be wish-ed."
"And lose the name of action."
"And all for nothing."
"And so I am reveng-ed."
"And am I then reveng-ed."
"O nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd."
"O help him, you sweet heavens."
"O heavenly powers, restore him."
"O, I die, Horatio." [1]

[1] To get the full effect of these falling series contrast the rhythm of Hamlet's last words "The rest is silence" — the

In all these *Hamlet* phrases the interest of the thought cumulates in the first wave of the rhythm-series, through the words standing at the beginning having more significance than those that follow. Each phrase begins with a sharp upward sweep; the second wave rises more slowly and does not reach so high a pitch as the first; and the series then tumbles down with a falling impulse. This rhythm-theme has in it an association of ineffectiveness, incompleteness, failure. One may express the same thing by gesture, raising the arm with a strong, vigorous effort; then letting the muscles relax slightly; then for a moment making them tense again, so that they lift the arm a second time, but without the energy the first movement had; and then suddenly relaxing the muscles altogether and letting the arm fall lifelessly. It is the rhythm that in music is indicated by —



sad epitome of the whole play — with the rush of Macbeth's last flaming defiance of the powers of heaven and hell: —

"Lay on, Macduff,
And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'"

In the one rhythm series life breathes itself out with a flickering sigh — "The rest" — my love, my life, and its sad failure — "is silence," let it be buried in my grave with me. In the other series the defiant soul crashes through the gates of life and flings its cheaply purchased bargain full in hell's face.

Such a rhythm we inevitably associate with the failure of promise, recreancy, futility, etc., and Shakspere has merely interpreted these notions into terms of attention-stress. The rhythm can thus make its way into the English mind without the utterance of a single vocable, or the making of a single gesture, and without any of the apparatus of scene and stage setting: it is the rhythm of the thought itself.

But not only do the rhythm-series of poetry thus reflect the 'motions of the soul': they may also reflect the operations of nature, as they do in *Lear*, III. 2. 1–9:—

> "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
> You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
> Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
> You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
> Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
> Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
> Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
> Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
> That make ingrateful man!"

In this the rhythms suggest to the mind the storm picture which the words describe. Any one who has noticed the blowing of the wind in a violent tempest will catch the suggestiveness of the first verse: two long continuous impulses followed by two sharp puffs of impulse, which are in turn fol-

lowed by a long violent impulse; then a brief pause followed by another violent rush. This becomes apparent if we substitute meaningless sound-impulses for Shakspere's words and mark their rhythm-sequence carefully (the point indicates a staccato impulse such as we have in an English short syllable followed by a stopped consonant; the repeated vowel indicates an unusually long wave; the hyphen indicates the wave connection as determined by the sense); we shall have, then, as the rhythm representation of our first verse —

laaa — laa la-la-la-la laaa laaa

The second verse which describes a waterspout (not a 'hurricane' as it seems to in Modern English) has a rhythm more vaguely suggestive than the former: —

la la-la-la la-la-la-la-la la

yet there is a swirling in the rhythm caused by the short impulses in its middle waves.

In the third verse we have —

la la-la-la la-la-la la-la-la

with a sharp cumulative wave at the end.

In the fourth the lightning is pictured: —

la la-la-laa la la-la-la-la-la laaa

and very graphically pictured in the rhythm; the

forked, hissing, blinding flashes, zigzag through the thought, running over into the next verse in —

laa-laa-la la-la-laa-la la-la-là

and, singing and forking, plunge, with one blinding flash followed by three shorter flashes, into —

laaa laa la la.

Human words in normal rhythms could not picture more graphically the blinding rage and capricious havoc of lightning than they do here. Then the rolling thunder crashing and reverberating through —

"And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' th' world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,"

la-laa laaa-la-la-laa-la
là-là la-là-la-laa-la-là la-laa
là la-laa-laa laa-la-la-la la-la

and rolling away in —

"That make ingrateful man"

la la la la la la.

Here we have the very music of the storm and entangled in it the passion of a storm-tossed soul.

This is followed by an interlude of tinkling prose in the fool's chatter, and —

"Rumble thy bellyful, spit fire! spout rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire [note the flash in the word] are my daughters"

takes up the storm theme again, ending in —

" Then let fall
You horrible pleasure."

The storm motive then echoes away, and as the ravaged and torn landscape, with all the havoc the wind and lightning have wrought, comes before our eyes, so Lear's torn and broken soul reveals itself in —

"A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man,"

la-la la-la la-la-la-laa-laa-la,

with a far-away echo of the thunder muttering on the horizon in —

" But yet I call you servile ministers
That have with two pernicious daughters joined
Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head,"

and dying away in the agonizing cry of soul in —

" So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!"

la-laa la-la la la laaa-laaa la laa.

This is followed by an interval of lyric rhythm, in the fool's song, running —

ta-ta-ta ta-ta-ta
ta-ta ta-ta ta ta-ta
ta-ta ta-ta ta-ta
taa ta-ta ta-ta ta-ta, etc.

which falls like pattering raindrops after all this shout and fury of the elements.

One would almost be tempted to say 'art can no farther go,' were it not that Shakspere is so full of such fine adaptations of the rhythm-series to the thought. Nor only Shakspere: all our great English poetry will reveal such fine fitnesses if one only studies it intelligently. So that we may well say that there is no poetry like English poetry to reflect in terms of harmonious association all the multitudinous faces of Nature and the human soul: love, joy, sorrow, woe, death, life, the quiet of the sunset hour, the hope of the morning, the exultancy of youth, the measured wisdom of age, triumph and defeat, — the whole visage of the universe as man gazes upon it in the light of his dear-bought experience.

We see, then, that these major rhythm series are not mere accidents of form independent of the thought, but are the bright woof of its emotional appeal. We see, too, how English verse form is something more than "iambic pentameter," with an occasional "trochee" for ballast, — something more than a mere tinkling succession of pleasant accent sequences.

CHAPTER XVI

NOMENCLATURE AND NOTATION

THESE, then, are some of the fundamental principles of our English verse form. The question naturally arises, How are we to describe them in a simple system of nomenclature, and how are we to indicate their presence in a simple system of notation? If we have definitely abandoned the classic nomenclature and notation, what is to take its place?

The question is not of such importance as it seems to be. The poet's rhythm is so inevitably associated with his thought that he does not have to indicate his rhythmic intentions when he writes his poetry. The elements of the rhythm are part of the idea, no matter how the idea is formulated. When they are not so, good poetry ceases to exist, as we have already made clear in our chapter on the Limitations of Poetry. So for purposes of writing poetry and reading poetry, nomenclature or notation is no more necessary than it is in writing or reading words: we do not have to declare every time we use it that *nomenclature* is a word of four

impulses with primary stress on the first syllable and secondary stress on the last, the two medial stresses being unstressed. For we give the word sound-impulses to correspond with this stress-configuration when we speak it; and when we read it, the letter-signs suggest the whole word, syllable-division, stress-impulses, and all. So with the poet's verse, — its rhythm is, as we have already shown, a part of the identity of the successive impulses of its thought.

But it may be useful to have a system of nomenclature and notation in order roughly to describe the varying characteristics of English verse-structure; and the matter is not difficult, provided we are willing to call simple things by simple names. In our endeavour to do this, we have already been making use of a simple system of nomenclature. We have coined the term "thought-moment" to describe the unit groups of thought-impulses which make up a verse. But if the term is objectionable, the student may still use "verse" and "half verse" (though he will find it difficult to describe those groups of ideation-impulses which are less than half the verse, and occur very frequently in English poetry, if he does not make use of some term like "thought-moment"). He may still use *cæsura* "cutting" if he wishes, though the German term, *Pause*, in its English translation is much more

accurate, and lends itself easily to a further distinction of "mid-pause" and "end-pause," which is often necessary in describing English verse. And since the effect is quite different if the pause follows a stressed impulse from what it is when the pause follows a low impulse, we may aptly distinguish the pause as being "high" in the former case and "low" in the latter, making the terms "high-pause" and "low-pause." And as frequently in English verse series we have an extra falling-impulse thrown in before the pause, whether it be mid-pause or end-pause, we may aptly speak of an "extra-impulse pause," which is better than the artificial terms catalectic or acatalectic verse, as there is no notion of 'completeness' or 'incompleteness' in the English series.

Then we have "rhythm," corresponding to the classic metre, a term already in common use to describe phenomena similar to those of English verse. We have "attention-stress" as the material of this rhythm, corresponding to the quantity of syllables in classic prosody. The various kinds of this stress are "word-stress," "sense-stress," "emotion-stress," "rhythm-stress," corresponding to the natural and positional quantity of classic prosody. The various grades of this stress are Primary, Secondary, with Lack of Stress as a third determining grade for prosody. The first two

terms can be further qualified by "high," "normal," and "low" if further qualification is necessary. We may still retain the "long" and "short" of classic prosody to describe the character of rhythm-waves, adding a third term, "half long," to describe those impulses of English speech which vary between a long and a short syllable.

As unit groups in our prosodic system we have "waves of impulse" instead of feet. We can use the English numerals instead of the Greek prefixes, and describe English verse as being in "five-wave rhythm" instead of pentameter, with "four-" for tetra-, "three" for tri-, "two" for di-, "six" for hex-, etc., — simple English terms quite as descriptive and graphic as the Greek prefixes, and quite as dignified.

Here we part company with classic prosody, and say farewell to "iambus," "trochee," "dactyl," "molossus," "tribrach," and all the unctuous fictions which the Renaissance schoolmaster has introduced into our English system.

We have "rising" rhythm and "falling" rhythm and "single" and "double" rhythms, with their corresponding units, "single rising wave," "double rising wave," "single falling wave," "double falling wave." We have also "mixed series" of double and single rising or falling waves.

We have, too, the "reversal," a vital characteristic of English verse, occurring at the beginning of a new thought-moment; and the term is a descriptive one, for the course of the rhythm is "reversed" wherever one occurs.

If we wish further to denote those emotional effects of entire series which we illustrated in the last chapter, we can easily borrow the nomenclature of musical expression which has developed out of similar conditions. We might say a verse movement was "adagio" or "allegro" or "scherzo" or "largo," etc., as well in the one case as in the other. We might say the stress was "piano" or "forte," or a series was "crescendo" or "diminuendo," just as well in poetry as in music, for cause and effect are the same in both cases.

In short, the whole system of nomenclature for a rational English prosody presents no new difficulties, puts no new strain upon language. The main point is to make its terms as clear and descriptive as possible.

Similarly, a new system of notation is not a serious difficulty. There is no sacredness in the breve and macron, and these marks are not peculiarly graphic.

We can easily represent a rhythm-wave by putting ⌣ over the syllables which occur in the falling parts of the waves, and ⌢ over the rising

syllables, varying the length and shape of these marks, if the student so wish, to accord with the character of the wave. By introducing an inverted caret, ∨, to mark unstressed syllables (whose vowels all have a sound like that of *e* in *the* used in connection with other words), we shall get a sufficient range of diacritics to indicate all the essential variations and characteristics of English rhythm. Take, for example: —

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought.

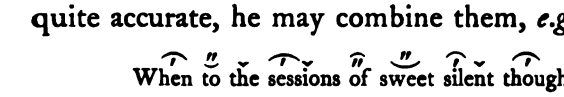
This is quite as simple as the old system, and much more elastic.

Or, if the student wish to be guided by stress solely, he can denote an unstressed syllable by ×, low stress by ″, and high stress by ′ (a German system of stress notation), adding a curve under a low-stressed syllable when it forms the descending part of a rhythm-wave, ⏑, and a curve over it when it is used in the ascending part of the wave, ⏜. As unstressed syllables in the upward part of a low rhythm wave are rarely used in English, and full-stressed syllables never occur in the downward part of a wave, this notation is practically complete. For instance: —

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought.[1]

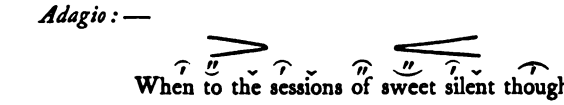
[1] I have found this latter method better adapted for the purposes of teaching than the other; for the speech consciousness of

or if the student feels that neither of these alone is quite accurate, he may combine them, *e.g.*: —



and secure the advantages of both systems of notation. If he wishes to go still further and note the emotional effects of verse-rhythm, he can add musical notation, *e.g.*: —

Adagio: —

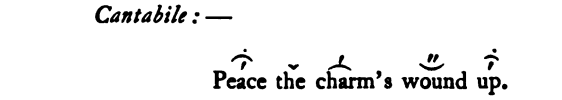


or

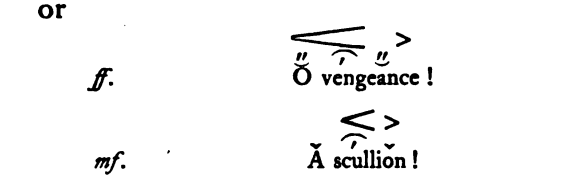


or

Cantabile: —



or



We may add to this two upright parallels, ||, to indicate divisions into thought-moments where

university students, like their knowledge of English, is very vague, and it is important to get them, first of all, accustomed to observing the presence and quality of stresses.

such division is significant, again making use of a common and generally understood musical term for an analogous phenomenon in poetry.

We shall thus have a system of notation which is graphic, simple, and flexible.[1]

It is not necessary, of course, to mark off every verse of English poetry in this fashion. But where one may desire to note clearly the inherent prosodic structure of particular verses and represent to the eye their peculiar features, this notation will be found adequate to his purpose.

But, as we have already said, nomenclature and notation are no great matter; the important thing is to understand clearly the principles of English prosody. And any system that will bring these clearly forth, describe them, and represent them graphically, will answer the student's needs. This our present system cannot do, because it is based on elements of prosodic structure which do not determine English verse form.

[1] The author's experience in teaching has shown it to be practicable; for students, even such as are quite unfamiliar with musical notation, soon learn to use it effectively.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters we have endeavoured to reach a scientific basis for the study of our English poetry. We have pointed out the relation of these phenomena to similar groups of phenomena which do not properly belong under the rubric "English Poetry." We have considered poetry as a body of related phenomena which make their appearance as the result of certain normal activities of the human mind. We have seen how the phenomena come within the larger group of phenomena which we know as Literature in being formulations of thought which possess for the human mind a more or less abiding human interest. We have noted the presence of some sort of Verse Form as the peculiar element distinguishing our phenomena from the rest of Literature. We have assumed this verse form to be primarily a rhythmic arrangement of the successive parts of an idea. We have shown how this fundamental rhythmic arrangement, in itself æsthetic, is punctuated and made more palpable

to the perceiving mind by æsthetic arrangements of various normal concomitants of the ideation. We have briefly and summarily examined some of the principal punctuation systems that have been employed in the history of poetry.

We have determined that the fundamental element of our English verse-punctuation is that concomitant of ideation which we have called Attention-Stress. We have examined into the nature of this attention-stress, the fundamental principles which govern its imposition, and the various degrees and qualities of it as imposed upon English thought to fix the identity, logical relation, and emotional significance of the various groups of thought-impulses. We have noticed in general the æsthetic norms which the English mind has selected to punctuate rhythmically arranged successions of thought-moments; and have tried to show how the subtle variation of these norms affects the English mind in adding to its thought new and peculiarly poetic interests and beauties.

We have made these distinctions in the light of the historical development of English Literature and English speech-material and not in the light of vague metaphysical generalizations. We have thus taken our stand upon the evidence of fact and not upon opinion or speculation.



In doing this we may have failed to satisfy those minds which would rather weave together pleasing "views" and "criticisms" in "literary" formulation than confront and know the truth itself. Unfortunately, however, no amount of fact and evidence will ever satisfy such minds. It is not the truth they seek, but the justification of prejudice. But we do hope that, however inadequately we have dealt with our facts, we have dealt with them frankly and suggestively. So that those who prefer truth to opinion, knowledge to speculation, will be led to seek and find more of the abundant evidence which awaits honest and painstaking investigation in this field of science.

The conclusion of the whole matter points but in one direction, the necessity of considering literature as material of science and not as a subject for pleasant talk. It means a corps of teachers specially trained for their work by years of faithful study, a body of men inspired by an intelligent love of the thought of their race and a strong pride in their native culture, bound together by that unselfish enthusiasm which has done so much for physical science, and working all of them to the one end — that of reducing a mass of disorganized and unfounded opinion to the organic unity of an intelligible science.

And the fine flour of this scientific effort will be a full and complete understanding and appreciation of English Poetry, the richest and most beautiful poetry the world has known.

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